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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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North of the Circle

TO THE NORTH! By Jeannette Mirsky. New York: The Viking Press. 1934. $3.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM

THIS chronicle of Arctic exploration from earliest times to the present is a story supremely well told—a welcome addition to the literature of exploration, sound in historic detail and delightful in its presentation. Glamour of the North shines from its pages. Despite the great territory covered, and the wealth of historic detail, "To the North!" contrives to catch the exciting drama of exploration and man's insatiable quest for what lies beyond the horizon. Nor, as we progress from the old-time exploits of Greeks and Norsemen, through the record of whalers, seekers for the Northwest Passage, and then for the Pole itself, to the present day of aeronautical adventures, does the zest diminish one wit.

I remember one summer midnight on Jones Sound, north of Devon Island. That was seven years ago, when radio on small boats, such as our Schooner *Morrissey,* was new. Our operator came aft and roused Bob Bartlett. "Someone in New York wants to 'talk' with you," he told the Skipper. And Bartlett, rolling out of his bunk, growled profanely that things were coming to a pretty pass when radio was making it impossible for man really to get away from civilization no matter how far north he went!

True, wings and wireless have shrunk the world amazingly in this last decade. And yet I dare say as much true exploration remains to be done, and as much romance and danger and thrill in the doing of it, as ever before. The technique is different but the interest the same.

In the opening chapters of her book Miss Mirsky offers a broad-gauge view of the North as a whole. She emphasizes that the basic guardian of northern secrets is the ice itself:

> Again and again the ice has shown its malevolent power. It seems almost hu-

(*Continued on page* 141)

Autumn Grief of Margaret

By JOHN CROWE RANSOM

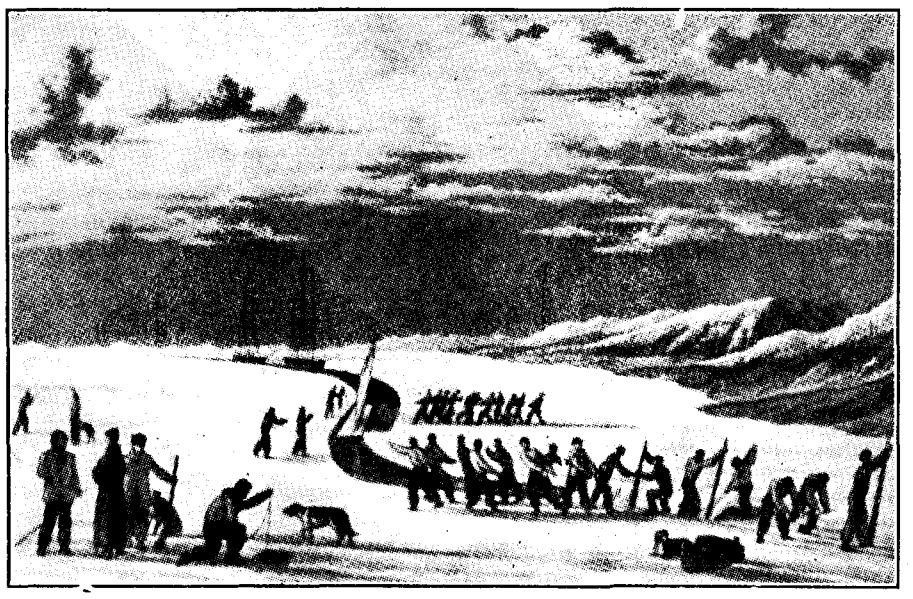
AT the fall of the first leaf that wind rends
She and the bough tremble, and she will mourn
The wafer body as an own first born,
But with louder destruction the wind sounds.

Soon these all will decline who heavy hang
In gelid air, and the blind land be filled
With dead, and but a windiness unchild
Her of the sons of all her mothering.

No mother sorrow is but follows birth
And, behind that, conception; hers was large,
And so immoderate love must be a scourge,
Needing the whole ecstasy of substant earth.

But no evil shall spot this, Margaret's page.
All her generations were of the head,
The eyes begot but not the wishful blood
And the issue was but flowers and foliage.

Virgin, whose image tall in the green grass
I keep, you are acquit of statute wrong;
And let the maiden pageant ever sing
Of this far away time of gentleness.



CUTTING A PASSAGE THROUGH THE ICE
Reproduced in "To the North" from Parry's "Journal of a Voyage, 1819-20."

Sketch for a New Lucretius

BY IRWIN EDMAN

WHAT would be the character of a genuinely philosophical poet in our generation? What would be his theme, his materials, and his special difficulties? What would be the argument of his poem? Perhaps, as some suppose, the answer to all these questions must be blank negation. Perhaps no major harmony can rise out of a major chaos, and it may be another century before the perturbed emotions of the present era can be recollected in sufficient tranquillity to produce a latter-day pæan, triumphant and comprehensive, to the Nature of Things. Certainly there are no real signs of a new Lucretius to look beyond the flaming ramparts of the world of our time. But genius ere this has been born at the end of an era. Lucretius wrote when the Roman world was already doomed, and Dante when the spell of the Middle Ages was already breaking.

Meanwhile, before one can attempt to indicate the outlines of some not impossible poetic synthesis of experience and aspiration, it is necessary to indicate the special difficulties of being either a poet or a philosopher in our time, and the special difficulties of being a philosophical poet. There are, of course, all the usual rare or arduous conditions of poetry; native endowment; the acute eye and the enraptured senses; the feeling for sound and the technical discipline of versification; and—for the philosophical poet—the art of thought. But there are obstacles peculiar to the poet of our time. Apart from the technique of poetry, one may say that the essence of a poet's activity is undistracted vision, the eye fixed singly on the object seen, and clarity in emotional response.

Now the poet, like anyone else in our time, is living among unprecedented distractions. It is extraordinarily difficult to maintain that simplicity, directness, and immediacy of vision which constitute the poet's infrequent and indispensable gift. With reference to philosophy, it was no less a philosopher than the great English metaphysician F. H. Bradley who remarked at the beginning of his own magnum opus that it is impossible for a philosopher to make his peace with the ultimate until he has first made his peace with his own soul.

Why, it may be asked, should it be peculiarly difficult in this age for a philosopher to find tranquillity of spirit, for a poet to achieve—or to retain—simplicity of vision, as contrasted with his confrères of earlier ages? I think (though I recognize that bitterness, hardship, and confusion have not for the first time arrived at the planet) for the following reasons, among others:

In the past a poet, without being in the least consciously philosophical, spoke in the easy assurance of a relatively fixed imaginative tradition. The Greek poet spoke out of and to a relatively lucid and simple as well as fixed Greek world. Dante's utterance was the expression of a definite and generally undoubted Catholic faith. Goethe spoke with the confident assurance of a romantic and adventurous philosophy current in the Germany of his day. Other poets of lesser range, Wordsworth and Coleridge for example, had not simply a set of theories which were the intellectual climate of their period, but the age itself had a definition and structure like those of the quartets of Mozart, which one feels could have occurred only in the fixed lineaments of the eighteenth century.

Parallel observations may be made about the philosopher in the present time. In addition to any personal problems he may have, he has certain intellectual difficulties and a spiritual uneasiness peculiarly contemporary in its origins. In the past, even in the recent past, the philosopher could turn with a simple confidence to the science of his day. Lucretius for his cosmic setting had nothing more to do than to cite with authority and enthusiasm the maxims of Epicurus and Democritus. Dante had simply to take over bodily the science of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Pope possessed himself, almost without bothering to translate it into poetry, of the deistic rationalism of his day.

But if a philosopher at the present time turns to science, with the expectation of finding knowledge that he may transmute into poetry, he finds that a strange sea change has overcome science, a canker has eaten into the security of knowledge. He discovers a dozen different "sciences," a score of versions of what constitutes knowledge, a pandemonium of alleged

(*Continued on next page*)

Van Gogh's Life in a Biographical Novel

LUST FOR LIFE. By Irving Stone. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by DAVID LLOYD

IN a pattern of eight scenes, through the Low Countries to the Paris of Cézanne and Zola and on to Arles and Auvers-sur-l'Oise, Irving Stone extends his story of Van Gogh's career in a narrative full of talk, even of pace, and sparing of tension. This was a stormy experience of life, an uneasy pursuit of purpose, dulled to torment and tuned to the excitement of achievement. The holding of the copious record to a key of monotonous quiet may well be adroit. The author has capably supplied his scene with a stream of gathered incident. He speaks modestly of unearthing the greater part of his material "on the trail of Vincent across Holland, Belgium, and France."

Emphasis on production is sustained from the moment the evangelist brother of an art dealer first takes to sketching coal miners in his novitiate in Belgium; there is discussion aplenty by the painters and writers Vincent meets in Paris—Gauguin, Seurat, Rousseau, Cézanne, Zola, Toulouse-Lautrec, strut their stuff in the most approved Latin quarter fashion. But as there may doubtless be many readers who will rejoice to find, this is a book about the painter, not about the painting.

In ten years of production before his self-inflicted death at thirty-seven, Van Gogh was a prodigious worker, feverishly industrious, recklessly dedicated to the snatch of graphic character, yet no less committed to the search for color on the scale of rapture. He drove his powers to their last ounce of vigor, shrewdly dropped out of his practice whatever lost its hold on his faith, and leaves behind him the impression that the full stop to which he was brought lacked full command, was in every way fortuitous. All this makes Van Gogh an exciting figure: the course of genius, despite the fervor it fairly arouses in its appreciators, is not

(*Continued on page* 139)

This Week

LISZT
By SACHEVERELL SITWELL
Reviewed by Arthur Mendel

BASKET FOR A FAIR
By LAURA BENÉT
Reviewed by Winifred Welles

OMAR KHAYYAM
By HAROLD LAMB
Reviewed by Mary Fleming Labaree

TENTS IN MONGOLIA
By HENNING HASLUND
Reviewed by Owen Lattimore

FRANZ ANTON MESMER
By MARGARET GOLDSMITH
Reviewed by John Mulholland

SALVATION
By SHOLEM ASCH
Reviewed by Irving Fineman

BEYOND WOMAN
By MAURICE SAMUEL
Reviewed by William Rose Benét

"A PARCELL OF BOYLERS"
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Next Week

TENTH ANNIVERSARY NUMBER

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Sketch for a New Lucretius

(*Continued from first page*)

transcripts of nature. He can no longer accept without critical question or inner uneasiness, the knowledge of his day. Nor is he better placed as to Faith. If he still possesses it, he knows it is no longer generally possessed or universally accepted. Thus the philosopher with imagination (or the poet with a mind) is confronted with ambiguity in the very version of the world to which he might wish to give imaginative expression.

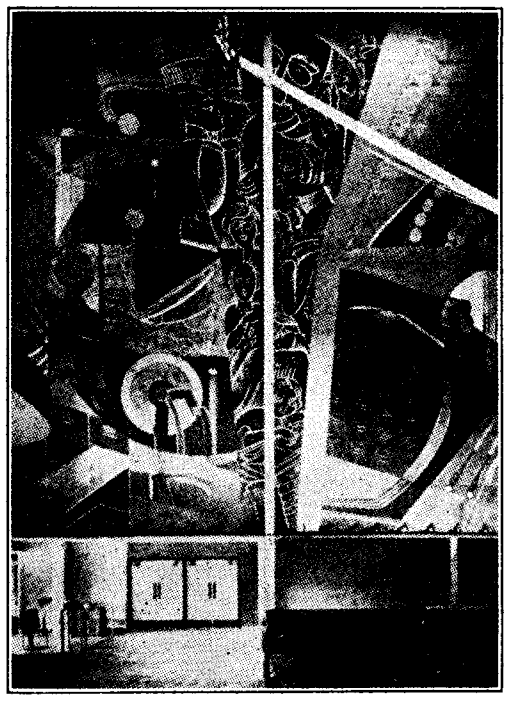
Yet the poet, if he has a mind—and there are any number of poets in our day thus encumbered—cannot help turning his thinking into song, cannot refrain from trying to make a philosophical version of the nature of things the substance of his poetry. There are various stages in, and definite limits to, such an enterprise. The simplest way in which a poet may turn philosophical is when he tries to express, to celebrate intellectually that surface of things which he had previously sung as beauty in things and joy in himself. The simplest level of philosophical poetry is simply Epicurean song, the turning into meditative metaphor and music, the exquisite surface of experience or even the exquisite agony of memories of it; the expression in verse of the simple items and elements of pleasure and pain, of the senses and the affections, of joy and sorrow, birth and death. Even poets almost exclusively enamoured of the visible periphery of experience inevitably find their delight in that surface crossed by the changing lights of memory, of troubled hope and of regret. They may wish to make their poetry simply an iteration and variation on the themes of joy and rapture, but they do not need to be driven very far by circumstance to philosophy, to realize that the beauty of things is vanishing and that joy in things or in their own love of them is as precarious as it is shadowed. It is very rare even in the purest lyric to find an evasion or an escape from this commentary sad and meditative. The classic instance [illegible] England. The poem is so familiar that we forget the triumph of its expression of pleasure tinctured with doom and laurelled with futility.

There is a second and subtler sense in which a poet may be a philosopher. The poet may become aware, along with other acute sensations of himself, that he has a mind. He may become aware of it in a fashion crucified and tortured. He may be unable to have or to express his own emotions without being aware and expressing his half cynical, half questioning commentary on those emotions. Donne in the seventeenth century, T. S. Eliot and his followers in our own day, exhibit this self-conscious self-criticism, this feeling of a pulse beat and the intellectual comment on that pulse beat. Poets of this stamp are obsessed, half intellectually, half imaginatively, by the sense of paradox that is in some sort a philosophy. They recognize the incongruity of their emotions and their thoughts, the sardonic contrast between their aspirations and the sordidness of their physical bodies and their social conditions, the triviality of their own intensities as compared with the sweep and movement of social forces by which they are at once dwarfed and determined. Their poetry becomes an agonized morality of self-criticism.

But before coming to philosophical poetry of the most comprehensive sort, two further minor varieties remain to be noted. A poet may immortalize pleasures and the vanity of pleasures. He may render the sense of emotions qualified and corroded by mind. He may do something more. From noting the sensuous surface of his experience, he may come, as Wordsworth did, to read that surface as a language of joy revealing something beyond itself:

> a something far more deeply interfused
> whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> and the round ocean and the living air
> and rolls through all things.

The edge of experience, keen and gleaming, may come to be for the poet merely the pathologically intense and immediate evidence of something universally beneficent and whole. All of Wordsworth's "Prelude" is in essence the history of the movements of the mind of a poet to whom no fragment of things but was urgent testimony to an ordered whole, no item of joy or color in matter other than an evidence of Nature, healing and benign and good. In such an innocent and earnest idealization of the world we are well on the road to the first order of philosophical poetry. But only on the road. For philosophical poetry in the grandest sense is an attempt to transmute into music and metaphor and movement, the use of all the resources of the wine of rhythm and of goldsmith's work in words, to make imaginatively real the whole vast panorama of things, its visible and affecting presence, and its grounds and conditions as well. The philosopher-poet in the grand manner must make the world at once something to understand and something to love. The task is one that perhaps transcends poetic art. The poet who aims too much at understanding gives us merely a metaphysics in verse. The one who tries merely to communicate his own love of loveliness and his own pain at its passing may be a healing lyric cry in an age lost in instruments, in mechanisms, and in formulas. But he is hardly the one to give us [illegible] for a genuine philosophical poem. By a philosophical poem is meant one that is cosmic in its subject matter, one that really does take the universe as its theme, but remains none the less poetic in character, in its intentions, and in its effects. Let us imagine our not impossible genius to be born, and coming, say ten years from now, to intellectual and imaginative maturity. Let us imagine him combining the passion and the technique of the poet with the range, the insight, and the discipline of the philosopher. What would be the themes with which he would be concerned and the obstacles he would face in giving them poetic incarnation? Or, to put it more simply, let us imagine Lucretius living today instead of in that dying ancient world which ours in so many respects resembles. Picture him living in short in this dying capitalist world.



SERVICE OF THE MACHINE TO THE NEEDS OF MAN
A mural by Davenport Griffen, at the Century of Progress Exposition.

Our new (or reincarnate) Lucretius attempting today to write a poem celebrating the whole nature of things would face very special and very recent difficulties. If he had been living fifty or sixty years ago, it would have been relatively easy. He would have had, as Lucretius had, ready to his hand the simple billiard ball physics of the nineteenth century or of Democritus two thousand years earlier. He would have had the simple diagram of matter in motion and the simple tale—almost as elementary as Genesis—of evolution. That diagram and that history might have depressed him as they depressed Tennyson in "In Memoriam," but he could have thought and sung with a certain sad steadiness of the world that science revealed.

The poet today, however, is made uneasy by the fact that science is every year eating its own words. The formulas of science are as varied and conflicting as they are mathematical and difficult. The poet, along with other half-educated laymen, has become as suspicious of science with its peddled systems of nature as have the scientists themselves.

But there is one thing of which our new Lucretius need not be suspicious. Systems of nature change but nature remains the same. God, so to put it, does not change his mind every time Millikan or Eddington changes his. God or nature, the ultimate character of things—whatever one chooses to call it, a perennial source and matrix of all we have and are. The new Lucretius, if he can keep himself free from provincialisms of time and space, may begin his grand philosophical poem, his enterprise in the imaginative interpretation of experience, much as Lucretius began it. He can begin not with the chanting of any given system of nature, but with a celebration of nature itself. By nature I mean the basic protoplasmic source of possibility, the locus of hope, and the material of aspiration. Nature would be to him the impalpable and inevitable home of all that is and of all that can be achieved or imagined. This "nature" is what Aristotle calls possibility. It generates men and milky ways, men's aspirations and their defects. It is the eternal and deathless theme of which all particular things and individuals and civilizations are passing instances and variations.

Our not impossible philosophical poet, having his imagination fixed upon that deathless nature which generates all births forever, would not allow too great a sadness for any given death or passing [illegible] beginnings and ends as seen from any personal or provincial perspective. But nature itself is eternally originative and fertile. We may drown but others survive. We die and others come to birth. There is an epitaph on a Shipwrecked Sailor in "The Greek Anthology" that illustrates the point.

> A shipwrecked sailor on this coast
> Bids you set sail,
> Full many a gallant ship ere we were lost
> Weathered the gale.

It is indeed only a failure of perspective that would make him fail to see and to glorify the beginnings implicit even in the sunset of a civilization. It has become the stock mannerism of certain self-absorbed semi-intellectual poets and certain gifted prose writers, almost poets, like Marcel Proust, to speak always in a twilight mood, as if the universe were coming to an end because one form of civilization, itself not very old, is now coming to an end. The heavens are not really falling because the society of the Faubourg St. Germain is in decay, nor will the earth not know another spring because capitalism is coming to a period. Our philosophical poet would, then, not only bear witness, musical and eloquent and pictorial, to the unquenchable passion, resurgence, and vitality of nature, to the forever renewed love and hope of each new young generation of mankind. He would voice, peculiarly in our age, I think, his and the general kindling at the glimmerings, in a thousand ways apparent, of a new civilization, through the current desperate travail coming to birth. For the first time, I think, in a philosophic poem (with the possible exception of Goethe) the future, the future of a possible rational and just society will become an integral part of the imaginative synthesis that tried to do justice to all existence. The poet would necessarily incorporate a vision of a generous and reasonable way of living together. He would communicate passionately the cooperative life of human beings living compassionately and sensibly together. This sense of social solidarity would make him more, not less, sensitive to the [illegible] life of the past, and it would be an [illegible] standing nostalgia for a past, which [illegible] spite all its cruelties was full of tenderness and beauty, that would partly infuse his work. But it is the sense of what the future might be, of what man might make not only out of nature but out of himself that would give the distinctive note to the work of our new Lucretius. He would make an epic that would be one long and glamorous expansion of Swinburne's "Glory to Man in the Highest for Man is the Master of Things." The eternal themes, love and death and the permanent renewal of nature, would be his as always. The eternal surface of beauty, "flowers and furs and cheeks," would still touch him to song. But the major harmony he would create would be that of men, all in the same boat, as far as birth and death and beauty are concerned, but finding a new hope and a new avenue of unexplored wonder in a shared life together.

Modern Short Stories

THE MAKER OF SIGNS. By Whit Burnett. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1934. $2.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

PROBABLY the short story is still being taught as it has been, according to the stock principle of rising and falling action, illustrated by the classic curve. Such an approach can have no reference to the work that is being done by contemporary writers. The modern short story, particularly in America, is free of the formula. It denies the necessities of traditional plot structure or time sequence. It knows only the necessities of mood, impression, psychological verity. Mr. Burnett has long been propounding such a theory, and fostering its expression by his inspired editing of *Story*. But more than that, he is a creator in his own right. This collection of his stories is better than a volume-length essay on short story technique. It is technique itself, vigorous [illegible] that are scattered through the book fall into place in a grouping of their own. "Mt. Hood in the Distance," "The Indians," "Serenade," and "Sherrel," belong together in what might be one long transcription of a remembered youth, a beautiful piece of work. Few literary problems are as difficult as the expression of a child's thinking in authentic terms. Neither pity, condescension, nor nostalgia will do. It is a matter of realistic memory,—in the last analysis, of identification. This group, together with an unrelated story called "The Return of Queen Agnes" may be regarded as a demonstration of the problem solved. Here are revealed the lost outlines of youth, the forgotten dimensions. "Serenade" is an adventure along two levels of experience simultaneously experienced, past and present conducting a sort of interior dialogue until they fuse in a despairing consciousness of unity. "Sherrel," already referred to, rises to such heights of intuition as to make it seem unique in modern story-telling. These must be read.

There is another group that centers upon travel and movement, a steady stream of experience vividly remembered. Burnett writes here as the impressionist, extraordinarily receptive to the impact of colors, sounds, or the subtler stimuli that reach the mind. These stories are records of sensation at high tension, often incoherent, often passionate, sometimes, as in "A Day in the Country," blending into a brilliant composition that sounds its single eloquent note.

Mr. Burnett seems least successful in essaying the objective approach. Such stories, for example, as "The Under Thing" and "Three Thousand Times a Day," are expressions of a sense of social injustice. They are quite sincere, but they do not come off as stories because in them Mr. Burnett tries to subordinate his material to his ethics. Yet these pages, too, are brought to life by the freshness with which Burnett observes the minutiæ of background. His offering to the short story is a brilliant subjectivity.

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All the Flourish of the Romantic Age

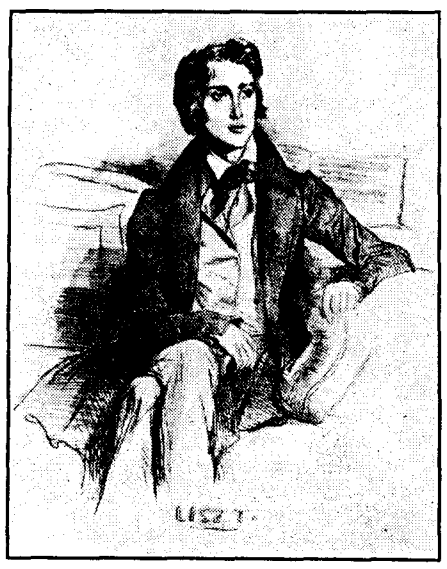
LISZT. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1934. $4.

Reviewed by ARTHUR MENDEL

"THIS name of Liszt, sounding strangely enough, in any case, to us Frenchmen, sharp and whistling in its sound, like a sword cutting the air, traversed and sliced in two by the 'z' of the Slavs, as if by the furrow of the lightning. . . . Both as man and artist he seemed to belong to the world of legend." The figure of Saint-Saëns himself, who wrote these lines, draws attention to one of the most extraordinary features of the fabulous personality of Liszt—the extent to which he bridged the gap between two epochs. For Saint-Saëns, who had known him at the height of his fame, lived into the second decade of this century—and Beethoven, who died in 1827, had heard Liszt play. Liszt had been the pupil of Salieri, Mozart's rival. And at least two of Liszt's own pupils are active today: Weingartner, who has just been conducting in Salzburg, and Siloti, who lives, teaches, and plays dazzlingly still, here in New York. Liszt, as Saint-Saëns says, embodied, as no one before or after him since Byron, all the flourish (*panache*) of the Romantic Age. He was the first great pianist, and the greatest there has ever been. He was a wonderfully handsome and attractive young man, the subject of such adulation as perhaps no other musician has ever received, the darling of the lords and (especially) ladies of every land, possessor of sixty waistcoats, three hundred and sixty cravats, and a mane of beautiful hair hanging down to his shoulders. "Le Roi a été très convenable pour moi" he wrote patronizingly of one king (Frederick William IV of Prussia); another he snubbed; the Czar of Russia he rebuked.

And at the height of his fame, when he was earning upwards of $60,000 a year, he suddenly retired from the concert stage. He never returned to regular concertizing, nor, from this time on, ever "earned a single farthing by playing, teaching, or conducting"; his annual income never exceeded fifteen hundred dollars, or two thousand dollars! He turned his back entirely on the footlights, devoted himself chiefly to composition, and, increasingly as the years went on, to religion. He lived in Rome, became a canon of the church, and resided in the Vatican close to the *loggia* of Raphael, and in the Villa d'Este in Tivoli.

Throughout his long career there was always something a little Mephistophelean about him; and yet he was, to an extent rare among men, generous, warm-hearted, tolerant, utterly lacking in envy or any sort of pettiness. He must be one of the most grateful subjects in the world for biography, and there is hardly a dull page in Mr. Sitwell's book. The glamour of Liszt is vividly present, and the discussion gains interest by the relative subordination of women and of Wagner as influences in Liszt's life—everyone knows their importance—and the emphasis on Paganini, Berlioz, and Chopin as decisive and fructifying forces.



LISZT AS A YOUNG MAN

From the lithograph by Dévéria.

Exaggeration is a pitfall of the biographer, and one which Mr. Sitwell, anxious to help redeem Liszt from the "flashy, tinsely, glittery, tawdry" category in which he has too often been placed, does not always avoid. Liszt's career, he says, was "an epitome of the most extreme energy to be found in the career of any musician, or, indeed, any artist, in history." What? More than in that of Wagner, or Da Vinci? "The B-A-C-H fugue is one of the most tremendous things in all contrapuntal music!" Liszt does not need, and cannot bear, praise like that. "It must be remembered that Liszt only really cared for the music of his own time. He was interested hardly at all in old music." This, though it is a point to which Mr. Sitwell returns several times, is surely too strong for the man who transcribed for piano two books of Bach's organ works, Beethoven's nine symphonies, and fifty-three Schubert songs.

Elfin Fugitive

BASKET FOR A FAIR. By Laura Benét. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1934. $1.75.

Reviewed by WINIFRED WELLES

MORE than any other American, Laura Benét is a traveler in those bewitched borderlands, where Walter de la Mare reigns supreme, and among whose gifted inhabitants are such lyrical writers as Mary Webb and Eleanor Farjeon. She uses fancy as they do, deftly and variously, but with her own individual quality. She writes knowingly of elfland, of beast-life, of solitary childhood, nor does she lack understanding of that still more remote country—the human heart. Her poetry is naive, but it can be sombre too, and deeply sad, and it is often, as verse of this kind should be, more than a little daft. A peculiar terror pervades even her moments of quiet tenderness.

This, her most recent book, with its inviting title "Basket for a Fair," is divided into four sections—Crystal Balls, Herbal Flowers, Colored Skeins, and Some Animals. In the last, the creatures most affectionately and ingenuously observed seem the most successful, such as The Hare,

> Innocence and swift escape
> Describe your manner, little one.
> Grasses hold your furtive shape,
> Nature's well-loved son.
>
> Helpless, wedded to the wild,
> Christened in the snow,
> Moon winked on you, plaintive child,
> Gave you roads to go.
>
> Fates fought for deceiving you—
> That white cotton ball
> Manifest on rear-end view
> Is a clue to all.
>
> Is a brand for your pursuit,
> Elfin creature delicate,
> Running till your paws are stubs
> You scarce miss your fate!

Two very moving poems are "Companion Heart" with its compassion and its final harsh cry, and "Little Key," a poignant revelation of the beauty and danger in a human relationship. Two others, memorable for an appealing strangeness, are "The Mirror and the River," and "Mila and the Birds." "Intimate" and "Glass Mask" are oddly contrasting moods of withdrawal, the first delightful for its meek serenity. But "Glass Mask" is a better poem, and it is anything but serene.

> Pity me, envious ones,
> For that I sit within,
> Like a kept gnat survey
> My kingdom thin.
>
> Molecules make a mole
> And shifting atoms, space,
> Wherefore I hold a glass
> Before my face.
>
> A mirror draws the sun—
> Shall not the sun defend
> The fragile entrance
> From foe and friend?
>
> Delicate guard, keep me,—
> A stone one day may fly
> Leaving my ravaged deeps
> To mercy of the sky.

Occasionally Miss Benét's taste is led astray by her humor. Somehow, such words as "extravert," and "normal thought," assume grotesque proportions in work of such delicacy as this, no matter how amusingly they may be used. And there are times when her rhymes might be chosen with greater care. But these are minor faults in a book which has so much gentle and fantastic charm.

Tents and Quatrains

OMAR KHAYYAM. A LIFE. By Harold Lamb. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1934. $3.

Reviewed by MARY FLEMING LABAREE

"HERE again is a book of escape," Mr. Tomlinson might say. But not in the sea-going tradition, since it is neither doubloon nor sandalwood nor whale oil which Mr. Lamb pursues. He stalks the great Quatrain Maker through a Seljuk Asia which he knows as thoroughly, limns as deftly, as Mongol and Tatar Asia of "Genghis Khan" and "Tamerlane." Again as in "Nur Mahal" we have a volume defying the formal limits of fictionized biography or historical novel. It is the inimitable tale of a man whose name has for centuries teased the curiosity

HAROLD LAMB

which is normal dower of every human being, a man whose adventures of body and spirit are equally worth sharing—Omar Khayyam.

By dint of not a little book learning and travel learning, considerable knowledge of the springs of feeling, thought, and action, also an imagination more than ordinarily wise, Mr. Lamb is well fitted to play the role of guide along old caravan tracks of Western and Middle Asia. With Omar we enter the world of old Khorasan when this son of Ibrahim the Tentmaker was in his adolescent schoolboy years; we ride with him and Rahim his milk-brother under the banner of Alp Arslan to Malasgird where the Seljuk Lion set his foot upon the neck of the Emperor of the West; with him (but without Rahim) we go campaigning to Baghdad and Jerusalem. Under another banner, the banner of his passion for Yasmi, we press on to Aleppo. We behold him as court astrologer. We live with him in the House of Stars and in his Little Palace. We march with him to the brink of death in mysterious and baleful Alamut. Again the House of Stars, a conjunction of opposing wills, desires, and life-patterns, seeming disaster and darkness.

All sorts and conditions of men brushed robes with Omar, gathered with him about charcoal brazier and banquet cloth, yet he consorted also with the vivid personalities, the high and mighty ones of his day. His destiny was knit up with theirs. There were scholars and poets, Jafarak the royal Jester, Malikshah the warrior-king, Nizam 'ul Mulk, one of the outstanding prime ministers of history, Hassan-ibn-Sabah who fathered a brood of assassins. Yet despite richness of setting and variety of actors, it is always Omar who is stage centre and holds the eye.

In the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth centuries Persian writers paid tribute of fact, fancy, or critical opinion to the life and works of Omar Khayyam. And down to this very year, men in other tongues beside Persian have voiced their praise or dispraise of him, have set down their own or others' thoughts concerning him. So late as 1851 his "Treatise on Algebra" was edited and translated into French, while in the Leyden Library is a prized manuscript of his comments on Euclid. And this brings forward a fact difficult to digest for us of the untutored West. It was as astronomer, mathematician, and daring thinker that Omar made his mark upon the intelligentsia scattered through the lands of Byzantine emperors, Abbasid Califs, Sultans of Seljuk, and lesser dynasties. In those lands today it is the same. That English-speaking peoples have a different idea, that we know him at all, is the merit of Edward Fitzgerald.

Seven hundred ninety-nine years have flowed by since a man of Samarkand arrived at Nisapur and went to the Hira Cemetery on pilgrimage to a grave upon which had fallen, according to their wont, petals of pear and peach. And still men seek to know what manner of man he had been whose dust lay there—what fires burned within him, what he and Fate had together wrought during his allotted time on earth.

Whinfield, Nicolas, Browne, Fitzgerald, with many another, have striven to give Omar Khayyam's poems to those who do not know the sweet Persian tongue. Now Harold Lamb has given us the man himself. But even more than to much journeying and delvings in many tomes, it is to those same poignant and pleasurable quatrains that we owe this gift.

Van Gogh's Life in a Biographical Novel

(*Continued from first page*)

a curve which can be plotted when incomplete. Yet how far may the question be left out of the story of the life? The answer made here, as on the basis of a generally known achievement, is to drop it out altogether.

The entire experience of the maladjusted artist—and if we turn up the obverse of the medal, the reaction of the maladjusted contemporary world—is exploited in the form of a fiction. As "the novel of Vincent Van Gogh" the book turns back to the mood of Renaissance minstrelsy, while celebrating its hero in the temper and method of the current best seller. For the success of the narrative so organized the author must be complimented, for its disarming simplicity, and its natural and unvexed partisanship. The problems of the critic evaporate from its pages in the echoes of café saucer-talk—(" 'Tosh!' said Cézanne. 'And Tosh again,' said Georges Seurat")—and all the conscientious machinery of the collector of biographical evidence is ditched and buried under the story-telling felicities of the novelist. Spade-work "on the trail of Vincent" is consigned to the effects of romance, a modest, perhaps a wasteful generosity.

Something in result seems to be left out, or left a little too gallantly to inference. The beat of passion, inevitably expected, is hardly to be caught by its statement however replete; the cry for utterance sounds faintly in the record of the search for utterance. Yet if the difficult subject matter seems to elude the story, if the *roman à mille clefs* avoids the fire of its original while continuously speaking of it, the external life story is ungrudgingly thorough, it is judicious in necessary invention, and both sympathetic and skilful.

David Lloyd was at one time art editor of the New York Evening Post *and later a member of the staff of the Minneapolis Institute of Art. He is now working in the field of literature.*

On the whole few religious novels become a permanent part of literature, and when they do the circumstances which first give them importance are often forgotten. This is true of "John Inglesant," by J. Henry Shorthouse, whose centenary is this year being celebrated. The book roused great excitement on its appearance at a time when the controversy between Anglicanism and Catholicism was a live one in England. But as a writer in the London *Observer* remarks, had it based its appeal on that alone "it would have had as few readers today as Laud's controversy with Fisher, or Sancta Clara's treatise on the Thirty-nine Articles." What keeps it in demand is undoubtedly the fact that a fine talent produced an excellent historical novel.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Specifications for a Conservative Literature

Suppose the great split comes at last between conservative and radical in the United States, dividing families, uniting factions, crystallizing theories into two generalized and contrasting political principles. The cleavage will run through literature, of course, through belles lettres as sharply as through the literature of economics and politics and sociology, perhaps, indeed, leaving keener edges behind.

What the radical literature will be we can guess from the present,—there are already plenty of books that pretend to speak for a radical future. The great change would come, should come, in conservative literature.

The curious lack of an effective conservative literature in the depression period has been spoken of more than once in these columns. The reason, we feel sure, is that the true conservatives have themselves been changing. A conservative is not by necessity a reactionary, or a slave to vested interests. He does not always, or even often, speak for age against youth. The most brilliant conservatives in literary history have been young, sometimes very young. A conservative, by definition, wishes to preserve or restore values that he thinks are being sacrificed or destroyed. And he is right or wrong according to the nature of the values he fights for, and successful or unsuccessful according to the possibility or impossibility of saving them in a civilization whose law of success must always be change.

If, then, there is to be a conservative literature in this country as vigorous and as influential as the radicalism of the books of this decade, there must be more to its writing than doing it beautifully. There must be a desire to save, as obstinate as the radical will to reconstruct or destroy, and more discriminating. So far recent American conservative writing that deserves the name of art has been distinguished only by a sense of form and style as opposed to journalistic slovenliness, and by a grip upon ideals and character in contrast to an attack upon all stabilities. Robert Frost, Stephen Benét, Thornton Wilder, Robert Nathan, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Willa Cather, E. A. Robinson, have been conservative only in their art, which in itself was in many instances at the beginning a radical innovation.

The conservatives, if the great split comes, will be partisans in more than an esthetics; they will speak, like the Marxists, only let us hope less rigidly and frigidly, for a philosophy. They will have values in living to fight for, and professional quarrels over techniques of verse, types of diction, and methods of story-telling, which have stirred up most of the radical-conservative rows in recent literary criticism, will be forgotten in a struggle in which either side will use any well-forged weapon of expression that comes handy. We shall get then a literature of conservatism, which is something quite different from a literature that in form and taste is conservative.

Speed the day, for whatever the political complexion of the critical reader in this day of increasing controversy, he must be longing for fighting books well written on the conservative side that will shame the radicals into a literature that has more art in its propaganda.

The truth is that up to now the good writers have been out of sympathy with the conservative party in the United States. That party—it is of course not a political party but a fellowship of the like-minded, calling themselves sometimes Democrats and sometimes Republicans—has been reactionary, selfish, blind to the necessity of economic change, and sold to vested interests to be conserved at any cost to the public. No literature comes from this kind of conservatism; it is not indeed true conservatism but just the old piggishness of human nature with Mammon as its boss. A poet, a novelist, a critic, a dramatist, once he breaks away from the do-it-to-order of party journalism or the commercial manufacture of tripe for the columns next to advertising, finds no foothold in such a social philosophy. Literature, conservative or radical, is its poison, for a society concerned only with holding on to what it has grabbed has no use or time for literature. It would be slander to charge the conservatives at large of the United States with this gross and short-sighted materialism, yet they have certainly allowed such interests to represent conservatism. The trouble with conservative literature has been that one had to be a liberal in order to write it! When and if the new alignment comes, and when and if some principle more patriotic, more far-sighted, and more serviceable to an American civilization than a policy of holder-keeps-all, becomes a political philosophy for conservatives, there will be plenty of able pens available, and many a typewriter will be carried across the trenches into what was the enemy's camp.

According to a Viennese report Count Leopold Berchtold, the former Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, is about to issue his memoirs.

The work will be in five volumes. It will consist of two parts, one dealing with the social aspect of courts and diplomacy and the other with politics. Count Berchtold is reported to have included a detailed narrative of the time he spent at the St. Petersburg court, dealing fully with "those fateful days in 1914, when the aged Emperor Franz Joseph signed the declaration of war on Serbia."

The memoirs are described as "sensational in every line." Thus, for instance, says the report, "Count Berchtold felt convinced of the truth of the news concerning the Serbs' attacks on Temeskubin, which duped the old Emperor, it being wrongly alleged that his Foreign Minister had forged the telegram." The memoirs are to be published in English and German.

The Saturday Review recommends

This Group of Current Books:

TO THE NORTH! By JEANNETTE MIRSKY. *Viking*. A history of Arctic exploration.

A JOURNEY INTO RABELAIS'S FRANCE. By ALBERT JAY NOCK. *Morrow*. Follows the trail of Rabelais, with comment by the way.

LUST FOR LIFE. By IRVING STONE. *Longmans, Green*. A fictionized biography of Vincent Van Gogh.

This Less Recent Book:

CZARDAS. By JENO HELTAI. *Houghton Mifflin*. A story of Budapest.

"THIS BOOK OUGHT TO BE GOOD. THE AUTHOR IS RELATED TO THE BOSTON CABOTS."

To the Editor: *Rising in Defense of "Now in November"*

"Clairvoyant Insight"

SIR:—This is to enter a rebuttal to Alvah C. Bessie's review of Josephine Johnson's "Now in November" printed in your issue of September 15th—or, rather, it is to express surprise at your reviewer's failure to see any value in the book beyond the dramatic denouement. To me the denouement, logically prepared though it was, seemed far less remarkable than the way in which the author illuminated the casual happenings, the almost eventless events, that preceded it. The very passages which, according to Mr. Bessie, fail "to build up and hold the interest" are, to my mind, the most thrilling in the book. Underneath their quiet, their very inconsequentiality, there is a conviction—a strength without sensationalism—which I have not seen in any novel of the last few years. The section devoted to the drought, with the interlude describing the false promise of the wind-storm, is a masterpiece of simple but exciting prose. Mr. Bessie says nothing of the way in which the author continually accomplishes the sense of poetry without resorting to obvious poetics and the sense of vitality without the tricks of "realism."

But, above all, "Now in November" is extraordinary because of its almost clairvoyant insight, its ripe understanding of things, places, and people, its unaffected sensitivity to the minutiæ as well as to the major issues of life. It is astonishing that a girl in her early twenties should have composed a work which has, whatever else it has or lacks, such unpretentious but unmistakable power. It has—and how many books of this generation even suggest it?—wisdom. If ever a first book deserved salvos rather than condescension it is "Now in November."

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.
Elizabethtown, N. Y.

"Exquisite Balance"

SIR:—It is unfortunate that Miss Josephine Johnson's "Now in November" should have just the review it did have in your columns. Far from deserving the faintly condescending approval Mr. Bessie bestows on it, the book is, in my judgment, one which any novelist in America would be honored to have listed as his—whether as his first novel or his twentieth. Such an exquisite balance between exterior catastrophe and interior desperation has seldom been achieved anywhere. The "attenuated writing" of which Mr. Bessie complains is, in fact, the purest possible style; splendidly accommodated to the emotions for which it is a vehicle, beautiful in itself. It gives the reader that pleasure in the medium itself which is the highest virtue prose can strive for. And the "dead-level of the previous narrative" simply does not exist. I call Mr. Bessie's attention, and that of your readers, to such "previous" passages as the one in which Kerrin throws the knife and the one in which a rainstorm gathers but does not break. If any living American novelist besides Miss Johnson can achieve such sheer power so simply and economically, I have not had the pleasure of reading his books. If "Now in November" is a fragment, just what is a novel?

BERNARD DE VOTO.
Lincoln, Mass.

Mellowing Mr. Nock

SIR:—The very moment Albert Jay Nock's "A Journey into Rabelais's France" was published I rushed to a bookstore to buy it. As an abdominal surgeon myself I have always been interested in Rabelais, Chinon—and (appropriately) Jean du Bellay.—Bert Nock, whose work I have followed for going on thirty years, has at last done his better self justice. Long time he was too superior and finical. But Bert has graduated from the school of Hard Nocks and grown mellow again, as he was twenty-five years ago when, as Jack Reed used to tell me, he would sit on the desk in the *American Magazine* office and read Rabelais to the pretty office girls; mellow as he was when he would sit of an evening with a friend and guffaw over Artemus Ward or Mr. Dooley. Those days are pretty far back; and there has been a good deal of pedantry and opinionated condescension since. But now Bert is himself again.

Probably he got so thoroughly into the spirit of the old Frenchman, and so full of his gentillesse, that he just couldn't be cross any more. For whatever reason, he has written a gorgeous book. Get at it!

CHIRURGEON.
New York City.

Rabbits

SIR:—The poem in the latest *Review*, "Song of the Rabbits Outside the Tavern," by Elizabeth Coatsworth, is too utterly charming, original, and even *touching*, for words. One night when I was about 16 years old (which makes it 40 years ago) I shot a rabbit, in the moonlight, at the edge of the woods; and the sense of what she got into this poem flooded over me, and I never shot anything again. (Not even a man.)

DON MARQUIS.
New York City.

John Jay Chapman

SIR:—May I say through your columns that, for the purposes of a biographical study of the late John Jay Chapman which I have been privileged to undertake, I should welcome the opportunity to see any letters from him or any other material of possible bearing on such a book? Originals will be returned after the copying of serviceable passages.

M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE.
c/o The Boston Athenæum,
10½ Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

A Bowker Bibliography

SIR:—As a part of the autobiographical volume entitled "Yesteryears," by the late Richard Rogers Bowker, it is desired to include a somewhat complete bibliography. During Mr. Bowker's long life of activity in literary, industrial, economic, and political affairs, he contributed widely to magazines and newspapers, in addition to the books which he wrote or edited, or in which he collaborated. It is requested that those who have such material will send specific information regarding it, or the material itself, to The Editors of *The Publishers' Weekly*. Things thus loaned will be preserved and returned.

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Great Doings in Mongolia

TENTS IN MONGOLIA. By Henning Haslund. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1934. $5.

Reviewed by OWEN LATTIMORE

IN 1926, my wife and I were in Kueihua, on the Mongolian frontier, waiting on the fortunes of a Chinese civil war; and there we stayed for six months. For part of the time a young Dane named Haslund, who had come from another part of the civil war area, was there with us. In a time of uncertainty and strain, pervaded by a sense of peculiarly uncomfortable and unheroic danger always round the corner, he was a comforting man to have near. His good spirits, his polar-bear appearance of immense strength, his wild but entirely convincing stories of journeys through wild country, his haunting Mongol songs and booming intonation of Lama prayers, all encouraged us to think of freedom beyond the grim, enclosing hills of the frontier.

When at last I slipped out through those hills, got to where the camels were hidden, and started on my first journey in Mongolia, Haslund saw my wife through the exciting days of the end of that particular civil war, with its mutinies and outbreaks of terror, and got her as far back as Kalgan on the return to what we hopefully call civilization. A year later he joined Sven Hedin's expedition and thus got back to his beloved Mongolia. He made his mark with Hedin as a master handler of camel transport, and when we next saw him, several years later, when he had just come back through Siberia and we were just beginning a year in Manchuria, he had a whole new stock of yarns of great days and great doings, among the Torgots of the Heavenly Mountains, in the Taklamakan Desert, and in getting his camels across the Kunlun to the Tibetan plateau.

The next thing in the saga of Haslund's life was an attempt to trade by caravan between Kashmir and Yarkand, over the Five High Passes whose names are like a challenge—Khardong, Sassir, Karakoram, Suget, and Sanju; a thing no European had ventured since the days of Dalgleish, in whose memory there stands a cairn at the place where an Afghan murdered him on the God-forsaken Karakoram, 18,000 feet above sea-level.

And next? The next thing was that Haslund got caught by an avalanche. A Dane who was with him was killed, and the trading caravan was done for. Haslund, with a hip smashed, was at last carried back to the Kashmir side, after appalling agony and privation long drawn out. It was the broken hip that finally sent him home—not to Denmark but to Sweden, where he married the girl for whom he had wanted to make a fortune.

To that avalanche we owe the best book of travel and adventure in Mongolia since Gilmour of the Mongols died; for Haslund, though he can write on occasion as if the saga-makers of old had risen from their graves to endow him, would far rather tell a story than write one, and rather take the road than do either.

From all this it should be clear that Haslund is not a one-book man. "Tents in Mongolia" is the beginning of what promises to be a remarkable series. But what a beginning! It is the story of an attempt by six Danes to found a settlement on the Sable Plateau, up in a corner between Outer Mongolia, Urianghai and Siberia. They broke the soil with ploughs, traded for furs, and herded cattle on the open open range. They learned Mongol, and worked with the Mongols to improve the economy of their nomadic life. But their most startling journeys they undertook by themselves, without depending on the Mongols even to handle their transport.

Perhaps the greatest value of the book is that Haslund is never "superior" to the Mongols, and yet never sentimentalizes them. His own spirit answers to their boldness and self-reliance. There can never be such another superb description of the old Outer Mongolia before the Red Revolution, for those days are over. Haslund's own description of getting into and out of a Bolshevik prison is amusing; but it is not the important part of the book. He was too close to the older Mongolia to feel the sweep of the revolution, which has its own romance and appeal to the younger Mongols.

He is to be read rather for his stout handling of snow-covered mountains, blizzards, carts breaking through the ice of rivers, and headlong rides and fragments of old legendary tales. Above all, he gives the feeling of a land in which, for a thousand miles from north to south and a couple of thousand miles from east to west, there is not a mile of metalled road nor a strand of barbed wire. And the whole of the land, blue plateau and hollow desert, dark forest and bright grassland, echoes with the legends and ballads and memories of a great people now fallen from power, but still proud in the saddle and gracious in their tents.

"By a method of my own for calling forth evil spirits, I drew out voices and tunes from a little box to the great astonishment—and subsequent delight—of the natives."—From "Tents in Mongolia."

Owen Lattimore is a newspaper correspondent and explorer. He is the author of "High Tartary" and "Manchuria, Cradle of Conflict."

North of the Circle

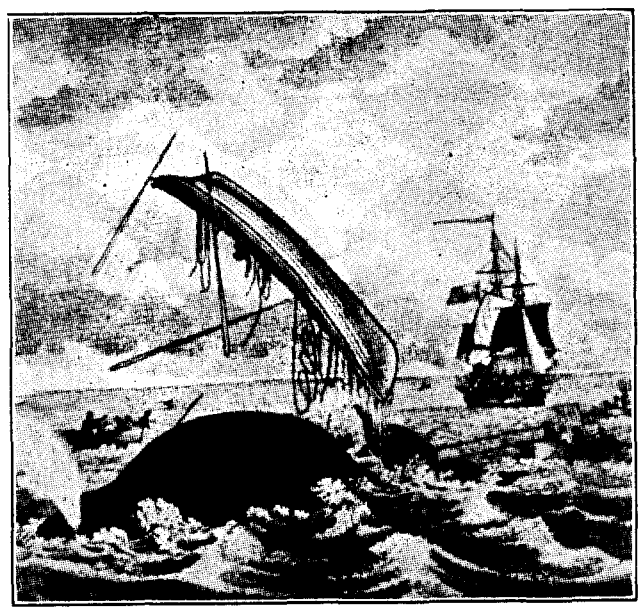
(*Continued from first page*)

man in the variety of methods it uses to repel the explorers who would invade the secret places it guards. Sometimes it is like a wary general who stages a shameful retreat in order to ambush the intruder; or it is like an enchantress, a grim, golden Circe, whose song ensnares.

The "victorious defeat" of the struggle to explore the North has lasted, says Miss Mirsky, for twenty-two centuries. That struggle she traces from the earliest explorers to the present day. In her pages the sympathetic reader senses the urge, as much for adventure as for profit, which made men seek a direct northern path to Cathay. We read of the rise and fall of the whale-oil industry, of Hudson and his Strait, and Baffin and his Bay. Then the northward attack of Russia and the era of Arctic activity culminating in the terrific tragedy of Franklin's voyage. Of Greeley's ghastly adventure, of the great Nansen and his *Fram,* of Peary's explorations and final expedition to the Pole—its controversial aspect sanely presented.

There is the great story of Greenland itself, first well settled shortly after the year One Thousand.

The eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth centuries saw the colonies flourish and prosper; and then quickly, mortally, they declined, so rapidly that by 1400 the colonies of Greenland, with their bishops and priests, the many people who composed the one hundred and ninety townships, the fine churches and spreading homesteads, were completely gone, like rain in deep snow. Gone suddenly like a note cut short. Gone the very memory of its existence. And the sagas that sing of it came to be regarded not so much as history, but as the recitals of happy dreams of a Never-Never Land, pleasant, pious lies. No one knows what calamity befell, whether they died in the Black Plague of 1349, whether the ice overwhelmed them, or whether they were killed by armies of Eskimo.



"DANGERS OF THE WHALE FISHERIES"
From Scoresby's "Account of the Arctic Regions" (1820.)

From its tragedies of long ago Greenland today has developed into a happy remote world of its own, a unique example of intelligent national administration.

Probably the most spectacular Arctic disaster was the loss of the Franklin Expedition, when its two vessels, the *Erebus* and the *Terror,* with their complement of 192 men, were swallowed by the Arctic wastes in 1847. The story of that tragedy was pieced together in later years as scraps of evidence were found by relief expeditions. In contrasting exploration of that period with what exploration has come to be today, Miss Mirsky writes:

> The overwhelming tragedy that descended on the Franklin Expedition could not have happened today. At least it is pleasant to think so. By virtue of the wireless and radio the outside world would have been able to follow the daily progress of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* and participate in everything but the actual task. The exact course would have been known, the death of the leader mourned, the purposeless and doomed floating with the ice-pack appreciated for what it meant, and rescue undertaken as soon as starvation and disease enshadowed them.

Useful for practical purposes, and invaluable for rescue, as radio has come to be for the modern expedition, in some respects perhaps it is not an altogether unmixed blessing. Sometimes, perhaps the stay-at-home world wishes that the radio communication was lacking which inflicts upon it each morning at breakfast the intimate account of all the ventures, actual and fanciful, which have befallen the heroic and geographically remote explorer—at so much a word.

Be that as it may, one finishes this admirable and comprehensive volume with a feeling of gratitude to its author—appreciation for a broad, exciting canvas deftly and authoritatively painted. And the realization, too, that the brave days are not all behind us as regards Polar exploration, for the last few years have seen aviation exploits whose gallantry matches those sagas of by-gone years.

George Palmer Putnam has been director of two Arctic expeditions.

A Discovery and Its Surprising Results

FRANZ ANTON MESMER. By Margaret Goldsmith. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN MULHOLLAND

FRANZ ANTON MESMER, a studious Viennese doctor, conceived an idea he could not seem to develop. In the century and a third since his death others have made of this idea a couple of religions, a stock vaudeville turn, and the scientific treatment of mental diseases. Miss Goldsmith in her excellent study of Mesmer not only gives the biographical details of the man but follows the mesmeric theory along its amazing path through the years.

Mesmer's theory of healing, which even when not fully developed was of demonstrable value, brought the scorn of the medical world instead of serious research. Real charlatans, making use of a combination of trickery and his name, were investigated by science. So throughout her book the author shows the amazing lack of judgment, the bias, and even personal fear, of the scholars of the past hundred and fifty years. Those who fearlessly followed his lead, on the other hand, were the founders of psychotherapy.

Mesmer treated his patients alike, prince as well as peasant, and followed a treatment new in theory but somewhat similar in form to the older exorcists. He was frowned upon by the commercial minded physicians, by those to whom new discoveries were unpopular, and by the conservatives who claimed to see a demonstration of charlatanry preying upon the superstitious. The delighted patients were not considered and he was driven from Austria. Later in Germany and France he had an enormous following, but all scientific recognition was denied. He died in Switzerland, practically forgotten.

The story goes into detail about the development from mesmeric sleep to supposed trance clairvoyance, to spiritism, and the offshoots to theosophy, to New Thought, and Christian Science. The account also is given of the evolution of Mesmer's therapeutical theory to its present status.

Miss Goldsmith has carefully documented her work, but those with the will to believe in spiritism will raise their voices and yell an hysterical denial of trance mediumship being an accidental offshoot of a misconception of mesmerism. Yet the steps between are logical and clear; a mental case being put to sleep by hypnotism, a person in such a sleep talking, considering such talk a prophecy and diagnosis by God, forgetting God and considering the talk spirit-inspired, forgetting the medium and believing the voice the spirit's own. The steps are just as logical through the mediumistic days of Madame Blavatsky, to theosophy; or from the days when the New Hampshire blacksmith's son started with hypnotism coupled with prescriptions (strong for the rich—weak for the poor) to the time when he discovered the medicines made little difference and began to call his work the "Science of Christ."

The book will not, however, keep the majority of men, and of women, from continuing to give credence to the most fanciful ideas of what a hypnotist, né mesmerist, can do. Even the learned author quotes, "La suggestibilité normale à l'état de veille," and then I regret to record goes on to say, "With these few simple words Bernheim had explained the delusion that an Indian lad climbs up a rope." (Miss Goldsmith, the Indian fakir knows naught of hypnotism nor does he use it.) Most persons will continue to regard hypnotism as an occult gift.

But even though one book cannot do away with all the ignorant beliefs surrounding hypnotism this is certainly the book with which to start. It should be required reading for the educated person.

John Mulholland is editor of The Sphinx.

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A Tower of Babel in Jewish Poland

SALVATION. By Sholem Asch. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by IRVING FINEMAN

THE story of the Tower of Babel, early in Genesis, has always seemed profoundly symbolic of a pattern in human life: Man, having survived the Flood, having learned how insecure is his faulty, his sinful existence upon the earth seeks for escape into the security of his Creator by building himself "a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven"; but his God, hardly greater than himself, jealous, like himself, of the children of men, and fearful that "now nothing will be withholden from them which they purpose to do," confounds their language, turns their tower into a babel. But man, pitiful and glorious in his aspiration, rears his towers again and again and again: sometimes out of the works of his hands, sometimes out of ideas. He produces a Christ and confounds that simple tower of loving aspiration into a Christianity torn by discordant churches, with a history of hateful persecutions, of witch-burnings and inquisitions and crusades and pogroms. And here is the story of a Jewish Tower of Babel, of hassidism that began in the eighteenth century as the doctrine of a way of life, simple, humane, warm, earthy, and joyful, yet aspiring *through life* to divinity, to identity with the wonder and essential virtue in all creation. In little more than a century it had been confounded, by ignorance, by importunate misery under unremitting oppression, by the greedy exploitation of credulousness, into the cults of competing wonder-workers, entangled in a morass of superstition and magic, or hopelessly lost to man in the mazes of unearthly mysticism.

The story Sholem Asch tells in "Salvation" takes place in Poland in the middle of the nineteenth century when the confusion in hassidism was well under way, but he suggests the whole sweep of that movement in the figure of his Jechiel, who begins—like the great Baal Shem Tov, the eighteenth century founder of hassidism—as a humble, unlettered youth, strong and loving life, not intellectual but passionately possessed by the sense of imminent divinity. The child, Jechiel, scandalized the village congregation and earned a whipping from his pious father when he was prompted in the synagogue to do a handspring and stand on his hands counting a hundred to the glory of God. Like the Baal Shem he early learned to hate the Pharisees with their cold, ritualistic piety. But though he too, however unintentionally, acquired a reputation as *zaddik,* a saintly worker of wonders, he came to his end full of doubts and disillusions, surrounded by a mob of ignorant and oppressed humanity besieging him not for community with God but for the gratification of their pitiful or greedy earthly desires. In between, Jechiel himself experiences all the personal joys and sufferings men are heir to, and in striving to help his fellow-man sees both the fine flower and the corruption of hassidic aspiration. His own drama begins when in weary desperation he pledges God's help to a supplicant.

The story develops as a pageant of life in that circumscribed Jewish world overshadowed by the defeated spirit of Poland in the grip of oppressive Russia. There are scenes as powerful as those in "The Dybbuk," as unforgettably poignant as those any traveller can witness at Lourdes or wherever the sorely troubled gather on this earth. The story is from beginning to end a drama of conflict between the irrepressible human longing for the good life and the Messianic hope for escape from intolerable circumstance. And if in this story the theme seems one of degradation and defeat, nevertheless the basic hassidic ideal of the sanctity of life itself shines through so strongly, from the beginning of Jechiel's childish delight in his faith to the final grandeur of his end, of death not furtive and fearful but faced as a revealing and integral part of the pattern, that though this tower too is left in disorder it is clear that so long as something of this spirit persists in men, more hopeful towers must rise from it.

Readers will perceive how strong a resemblance the movement of hassidism bears to early Christianity: the revolt from Phariseeism, the appeal to the oppressed, the aspiration to divinity. The difference lies in that whereas the early Christians preached salvation by renunciation the hassidim preached salvation through the good and joyful life—that is until they got confounded by the difficulty of extracting the good and joyful life from a world so systematically confused, and turned to all those forms of escape that men have devised: to superstition and magic, to asceticism and mysticism. Asch's story ends with mourners returning from the funeral of Jechiel to find the road barricaded by the builders of the first railroad, the sign of a new era in which they and their world would become shadows. But "each generation will see its own righteous man," says one; and it is conceivable that men may yet order their world so that strong towers of aspiration will safely rise from it. They will not then be towers of escape.

SHOLEM ASCH

It is a pity the translated prose is not better fitted to the essence of this moving and significant story. The salt of homely Jewish speech is lost in an incongruously lettered style; the mysticism often dispelled by vocabulary.

Hard Luck Story

A HANDFUL OF DUST. By Evelyn Waugh. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1934. $2.50.

EVELYN WAUGH has a considerable talent, comparable if not equal to Aldous Huxley's; but what he is trying to do with it is hard to figure out. The question came up with his next to last novel, "Black Mischief," which ran nine tenths of the way as a gorgeous extravaganza, to wind up with a scene quite consciously horrible, and designed to put the reader's teeth on edge for good. In Mr. Waugh's new novel, it is as if he had set himself the problem of imagining the most outlandish misfortune that could conceivably beset a modern civilized English country gentleman; and no one will deny that his answer to this problem has a devilish ingenuity.

Whether the author means anything by this, other than to make our flesh creep, or merely *epater les bourgeois,* is another matter. It would be unfair to divulge the nature of the situation which he has cooked up. But the novel cannot be intended as a horror story, for it is all led up to by a long, satirical account of a purposeless adultery, involving our hero's wife and the bright young people (it is in his attempt to escape from these that the decent husband later encounters catastrophe); this part of the book stands on its own feet, is excellent of its kind, and will be found amusing or depressing, depending on the reader. The title comes from the line in "The Waste Land": "I will show you fear in a handful of dust." Mr. Waugh has scooped up a good handful in the drawing rooms of Mayfair, but what he isolates in it is not so much the feeling of fear as that of disgust. This is perhaps not unconscious on his part; in any case his novel is extremely readable.

Intellectual Life

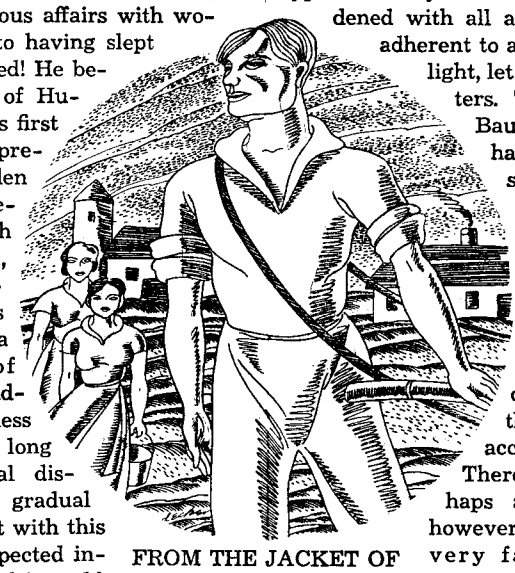
BEYOND WOMAN. By Maurice Samuel. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS is the quite remarkably verbose story of a man who was deeply infected with the intellectual life he had once had, and had dropped for what men regard as the normal life of a man, marriage and a business career. His truest intellectual friend, the owner of a small bookshop and a lover of exact thought, one Abe Parass, says to him toward the end of the novel:

> We stake ourselves against life as a whole. We want certain things badly, money or power or reputation, or a home and comfort and security. We engage the mind to assist. How shall it retain its purity? It has a job, and we know what happens to some one who has a job to keep.

So what finally comes to mean most to Hugo Enders, of Hugo Enders, Inc., Novelties, a man on the way to get rich from a successful business, is that he return to the purely intellectual life, "beyond nature, in the sense, let's say, that nature drives us to *do,* and to think only that we might do. Beyond woman, also, in the sense that our alliance with a woman is meant only to serve the natural purpose, to absorb us in it completely." He reaches his decision to return to the life of the mind after a long story in which his business relationships and his relationship with his wife have been studied in sometimes agonizing detail and his abiding interest in astronomy and pure mathematics made plain even to the printing of what must be fascinating equations and much talk of Riemann, Minkowsky, and Einstein. The author of this most variously informed story, Maurice Samuel, is obviously a man of intellect himself. His work is packed with philosophical observation and acute analysis of the various forms of human irrationality in human society as at present constituted. His portrait of Chester Grayson the "uplifting" lecturer (and, we are inclined to add, uplifting lecherer) is a complex piece of analysis quite brilliant were it not at times too heavy in detail. Chester's preoccupation is his numerous affairs with women. He admits to having slept with three hundred! He becomes the lover of Hugo's wife, and this first "affair" of hers precipitates a sudden change in her relationship with her husband, upon her confession, which whirls the Enders into a short period of mutual understanding and happiness together, after a long period of mutual dissatisfaction and gradual estrangement. But with this sudden and unexpected inner release of himself, Hugo's deep and persisting desire for a life of pure scientific thought rises up so strongly as to make him give up his business and determine again to plunge into a life of study. His wife takes this as the punishment he is visiting upon her for her "affair," though that really has very little to do with it.



FROM THE JACKET OF "D IS FOR DUTCH"

The present reviewer did not find this novel easy reading. Mr. Samuel writes with comprehensive knowledge of the details of Hugo's business and of the people with whom it brings him in contact. He brings the same knowledge to bear upon Hugo's obsession with mathematics and Chester's obsession with sex. He paints us a believable portrait of Hugo's wife, and understands a good many things about feminine nature and about the relationship of the sexes. Yet his kind of realistic writing is akin to the kind of painting that most nearly resembles photography. It is meticulous in detail, and lengthy and involved in its descriptions of psychological states and its reports of conversations. Sometimes Mr. Samuel writes with so humorless a precision as almost to achieve the ludicrous. In spite of all their thinking, save for the obvious pleasure they derive from sex, his characters are somewhat of a bore—probably like most people, if truthfully reported. They are rather depressing products of their era, though Mr. Samuel has displayed enormous patience in his analysis of them.

And yet this novel is certainly above the average. There are times when it suggests, without the style, certain novels of the past by H. G. Wells, there are times when one can see the results of Mr. Samuel's reading of Proust and Joyce. There is a great deal in it, from forthright sex-adventure to stream-of-consciousness writing. It is a book for the intelligent, a book full of life and thought. Nevertheless, to one reader at least, its style was tedious, its expositions too prolix, its characters so helplessly exposed to detached analysis as to lose human warmth, its men either (as in Hugo's case) too endlessly introspective or (as in Chester's) too endlessly calculating to more than mildly repel one's sympathies. Mr. Samuel had the stuff of a major novel in this book. He lacked only selective sense and style.

Pennsylvania Peasants

D IS FOR DUTCH. By Thames Williamson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

IN spite of its title, this new novel by Thames Williamson does not deal with the Dutch, but with the Pennsylvania Dutch, a wholly different matter, for these people are mainly of German and Swiss stock. Apart from that, the reader is never allowed to forget these Pennsylvania Dutch. In fact, he may easily reach the conclusion that Mr. Williamson noted their habits and idiosyncrasies carefully, whereupon he made certain deductions, and as a result the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch characters emerged. Fortunately, not too infrequently, these characters are imbued with enough of life to step out of their pigeonholes as flesh and blood being. Especially the three main characters come to life on more than rare occasions, and that in spite of their terrific handicaps as typical Pennsylvania Dutch beings, burdened with all adjuncts supposedly adherent to all such folk. In this light, let us note the characters. The hero, Herman Bauer, is stolid, greedy, hard, heartless, solid, slow, and thrifty. His wife, Katy, is placid, bovine, ugly, clean, and inarticulate. Herman's father, Old Jake, is tyrannical, reactionary, and cruel. Hence, all these one is asked to accept as typical.

There are others, perhaps a bit less typical, however, never steering very far away from it. Anna Bauer is tenacious and desperate. Florence Erdman, faintly worldly and desirable; Peter, her husband, vague, the typical cuckold; and Schlegel, the milkman, is the rural Don Juan. All these people are well attuned to create melodrama and passion for themselves. The author, however, seemed to think otherwise, for he found it necessary to add another typical aspect of the Pennsylvania Dutch scene, that of superstition, embodied in hexerei and powpowing. Unfortunately the entire unfolding of the plot depends upon this hexerei and powpowing, and as such, the book lacks real vitality, as it is almost completely dependent on the very special, the very curious, and the very limited and sensational.

With all these handicaps and unnatural ramifications it is surprising that the novel lives at all. Yet it does. It is graphically told and moves rapidly, in spite of the fact that the theme is utterly unpleasant. On the other hand, many of the otherwise slow and dull passages are relieved by a heavy coating of the curious and quaint, in other words, of local color.

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The BOWLING GREEN

IV.
"A Parcell of Boylers"

I SPOKE of Silver Bank, the dangerous shoal area north of Santo Domingo, suggesting that Stevenson found there the name of his famous buccaneer. I should add a word to say how it earned that name. It was there that William Phips (or actually his mates Rogers and Covell) discovered the great Hispaniola Treasure in 1687—one of the few plate-hunting expeditions that really came through; and only by accident. Nor is Stevenson the only literary hero we can associate with this matter; the affair came under the observation of Samuel Pepys in his official capacity at the Admiralty, and there is even a confusion in some of the old maps between Phips and Pepys. This pleases me, too, because I have always believed that the diarist pronounced his name *Pips.* (I think he somewhere rhymed it with *ships.*)

If you are curious about Silver Bank (once delightfully known as the Ambrosia Bank) have a look at Cyrus H. Karraker's valuable little book, *The Hispaniola Treasure,* recently published by the University of Pennsylvania Press ($2). It excellently sharpens a point I often wish to insert: the fact that scholarship is exciting, and that the sober university presses frequently publish the most thrilling books. Mr. Karraker tells us that as a Research Fellow at Pennsylvania he attended the Saturday Morning Seminar of Professor Cheyney. Something said there started him on a study of the prerogative revenues of the British Crown—which, incidentally, gave us the best known word in the literary profession, *royalties.* And before he knew it, looking up the legal status of treasure hunting he found himself in a story to allure any romancer.

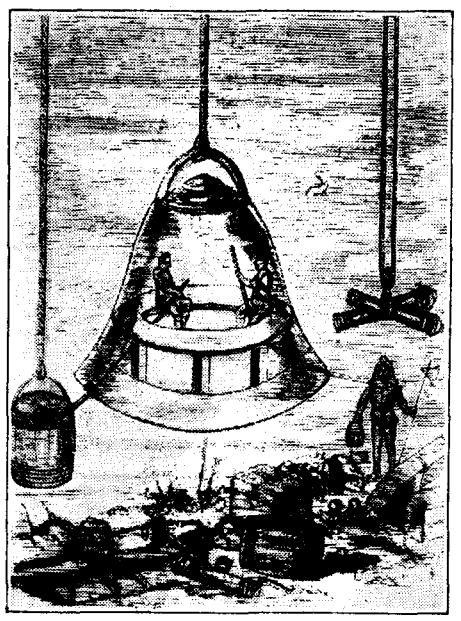
I must not privateer Mr. Karraker's trove, which he tells in excellent spirits. My purpose here is simply to note how his investigation tallies with the West Indies chart I studied aboard *Santa Maria.* This Captain Phips, a disorderly Down-Easter who eventually became Governor of Massachusetts and was biographied by Cotton Mather, had heard of the Spanish galleon foundered on the Ambrosia reef in latitude 20° 38′ N. He raised money from a syndicate in London and set sail with two ships, the *James and Mary* and the *Henry of London.* Phips had almost given up hope and was dallying in Porto Plata to trade with the Spaniards when his associates Rogers and Covell in the *Henry* bumped into the treasure. Sailing around the shoals they were alarmed to find themselves "amongst a parcell of boylers"—rocks or coral rings just awash in which the sea churns and foams like boiling water. They anchored hastily—"& by Gods blessing it being very small breese of wind all night in ye morning they gott Cleare of them." But exploring in small boats, just by chance one of the seamen noticed a "sea feather" (a kind of fan coral) of extraordinary size and beauty. This they thought would please the melancholy skipper, and sent down a diver to break it off. Did he swim, or did he go down with one of the crude "diving tubs" of that day? At any rate, groping in that hyaline translucence (the kind of thing you remember if you've gone swimming around the coral boilers of Bermuda), the man saw the loom of a strange outline. There was the bulwark of a ship, and corroded cannon. The coral fan was growing on the very deck of the galleon.

So then the fun began. What happened, how many "sows, pigs, dowboys and champeens" of silver they found, the gold ingots, the pieces of eight, the joke they played on Captain Phips, you can read in Mr. Karraker's book or in Cotton Mather. Before they were driven off by storms and sickness they got £200,000 worth of treasure. The king's royalty was £20,000. And on the chart before me you can see that "parcell of boylers" plainly marked about 20° 38′ North latitude—"coral rocks awash."

It's odd, by the way, that Dr. Johnson once used the identical phrase in such a different sense. Of the sale of the Thrale brewery, you remember: "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

⁂ ⁂

I'm going to dive back into the swimming tank, where I left this leisurely narrative. I'm thinking of the very hot and glaring afternoon as the *Santa Maria* came down into the Windward Passage—so-called, I suppose, because it opens a vent for the N.E. trades. It was quite late, just upon sunset, and the tank was solitary. Most of the passengers had gone to their rooms to prepare costumes for a masquerade dinner, and the high-spirited Mr. J., whose genial ambition was to meld the whole crowd together for frolic, had invited about forty of us to take cocktails with him before the party. Mr. J. is an accountant by profession, a grim calling and well acquainted with all forms of fiscal grief; in reaction from this he has a superb capacity for merriment in off hours. "Now folks," he would cry if the dancing in the saloon did not seem sufficiently ardent, "step on it. We'll have no fun on this ship unless we make it ourselves." Which was not intended to be taken seriously, for *Santa Maria* has an excellent disposition for mirth. But Mr. J. would skirmish briskly from one partner to another, never content unless everyone was having a good time, and served triumphantly as a social alembic. Or perhaps I mean what goes into an alembic—an alembroth. The dictionary describes this as "a double chloride of ammonium and mercury, used by the alchemists as a stimulant." And that's pretty accurate; for without Mr. J.'s good-humored and strictly amateur encouragement (very different from the horrid activity of a "cruise director") we would never have got together as we did. At the cocktail party that evening the



HALLEY'S DIVING BELL
(*About* 1700; *from Mr. Karraker's book.*)

bar-steward served his most picturesque philtre, called a green devil. Large are the sacrifices made by social primates, especially on a night of Caribbean warmth; for the one who had worked hardest to make the evening a success slept a night of innocent exhaustion in his deck chair. Or perhaps there were a few grains of paraplegia in the green devil.

But I'm getting out of sequence; it was before all this, and looking out from the swimming pool on deck I suddenly saw Cape Maysi and the hills of Cuba purple against sunset. That was a landfall more worthy of Columbus, I thought, and gazed long at those rugged hills. Strangely mixed associations of beauty and tragedy must surely come to mind when we think of Cuba—especially to one old enough to remember echoes of the "War with Spain." Even a Quaker boyhood was affected by the newspaper and music-hall uproar of 1898. Just beyond that darkening headland were Guantanamo, El Caney, Santiago de Cuba. I remembered for the first time in all those years that there were once tin soldiers made in the likeness of North Americans, Spaniards, and Cubans. I remembered a horrifying newspaper drawing of the explosion of the *Maine* which at the age of eight I illuminated with colored crayons. Mr. Hearst, more culpably, was doing the same on a huge scale. It was not an affair which we can look back to with much pride. I have not read Mr. Millis's book, *The Martial Spirit,* which I believe deals with that war in a spirit of creditable bitterness and disgust; but it is one of the books that hearsay tells me is worth reading. So also Mr. Hudson Strode's *The Pageant of Cuba* which is announced to come soon.

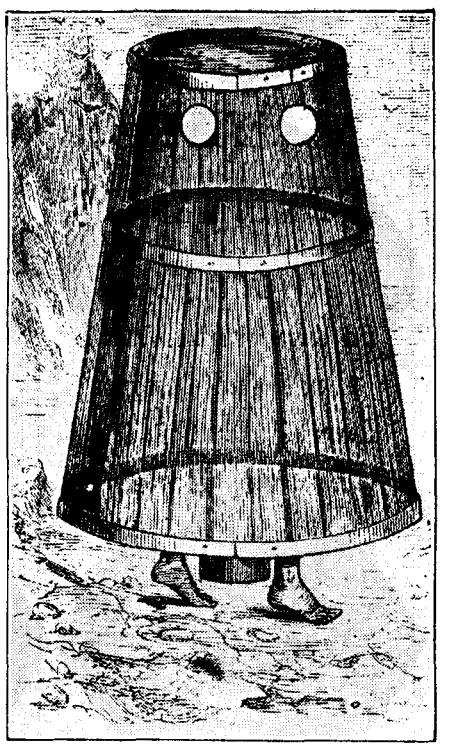
The lady who was eager to talk about Conrad had now left the pool, and I was alone for a few minutes with Cuba. She was disappointed in me (I mean the lady) because I did not warm up to literary conversation; and in fact I never told her that I had in my pocket Conrad's own cigarette case which I was taking with me as a talisman. I didn't tell her because it would have been a perpetual opening (a windward passage) into intellectual palaver. In fact the only person to whom I ever showed or mentioned it was a hard-boiled business man in Peru.

Absurd phrases or tags of memory come into one's mind when alone in the pool. The words in my head were What Maysi Knew. That same headland had perhaps seen the original *Santa Maria.* I was disturbed to realize that I know practically nothing about Columbus—"The Genoese" as poets prefer to call him; easier to rhyme. Poor old Columbus, got there without a Genoa jib such as they describe in the America's Cup races. When we make fun of high-pressure merchandizing we must remember that it took years of incessant badgering before Isabella was sold on the idea of having America discovered at all. Columbus himself was no great captain or navigator; he was first trained as a wool salesman; the way he kept saying *Sail on and on* to the prudent mate shows he was simply a man with a fixed idea. Columbus was a Customers' Man with the devil's own luck. And even at that he himself hardly knew what he had discovered. The important thing was not a bunch of tropical islands but the Trade Winds themselves. . . . But around the corner of Cape Maysi there was also a town called Daiquiri, a name with more immediate association. I went to get dressed for Mr. J.'s party.

The moral of the whole Spanish Main and El Dorado legend is perhaps that the treasure you find isn't always the one you thought you were looking for.

⁂ ⁂

In the hot sunlight that lives south of Jamaica we rumbled SW towards Panama. The maps in my atlases are printed much too pale a blue. We had passed between Haiti and Jamaica but without seeing them, so I could dismiss them from my mind—which has great powers of dismissal. I gain my geography not by systematic study but by personal association. Haiti, to me, is where my friend Bill Hall has had a good time, and Jamaica where Bill Footner ditto. There are photographs taken by Bill Hall, letters written by Bill Footner, that prove to me these places exist and have enchantment. I am grateful to these islands for having pleased such discerning men. In fact a chapter of agreeable literary savor could be inserted here about the time Bill Footner and Hugh Walpole were both in Jamaica. It is unlikely to be written. This might have suggested, as I stood on the foc'sle head that morning, meditation on what can and what cannot be written about. Journalism is gravely handicapped because it deals with identities and facts, crude lumps of circumstance. But so many situations, awarenesses, are too tender, too humorous, too grave, to be transmitted with the han-



EARLY DIVING TUB

dicap of personal identification. They can only be savored in the infinite peace and pleasure of one's own mind, where the best literature lives. To anyone sensitive to finer shades of truth, a gruesome unreality is often apparent in even the most conscientious news sheet. People simply don't behave or motivate like that. What game, we ask ourselves, is the writer playing? What's he trying to put over? Even a quite mediocre novel is truer to life as we feel it.

But in that sedative glare of sun I was incapable of thinking. Why should I? I'm anxious now to get on toward the Pirate Gold of Panama: there is still treasure there: I've seen it. What buccaneer's hoard or Crusoe wreck was ever so rich as that marvellous jumble of goods on the piers at Cristobal? The conquistadores were small-timers compared to the great coffee and cotton traders of today.

So I omit much. But we must at least record the great Plumbing Mystery, one of those misfortunes that happen even in the most careful ships—I remember a corker in the gay old *Caronia.* No Chief or Purser can possibly foresee everything that may be committed by unpredictable humanity. Perhaps it was inspired by one of those green devils the evening before. Did person or persons unknown, fatigued with celebration, plan to take a 3 A.M. hot bath, find the water turned off, and forget to close the handle? Did the flow presently resume and pour steaming through the vast faucets of Shanks and Co.? Or did the culprit simply fall asleep in his tub? At any rate, good Mrs. N., returning to a remote mining camp in Chile with clothes and gear to last her family for two years, was waked by shrills of alarm from the next stateroom. "Is there water in your cabin?" cried the adjoining lady. "Is the ship sinking?" Mrs. N. swung out of her berth and found herself a foot deep. But, experienced traveller, she knew this was no foundering, for the water was hot. Even the Caribbean is not so warm as that. The carpet was afloat, and she took a swashing tumble on the linoleum floor; but her first thought was to reassure her next-door neighbor—whom she found sitting in her berth rigid with dismay. The whole alleyway was in flood. So as we took our forenoon swim the hatch had a homely backyard look with the wardrobes of Mrs. N. and others laid out to sun. There were even trays of vegetable seeds for her kitchen garden in the Andes. I hope some day she'll let me know whether those tomatoes came through all right after their warm bath.

Such are the unaccountable chances that plague steamship routine. Only those who have looked a little behind the scenes know how difficult is the job of a public liner. Sometimes I sympathize with my old friend Captain Gissing, who, after some experience of passengers, one fine day put them all into the boats and left them there on a calm sea. He steamed away into the uncomplaining silences of Length and Breadth.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

(*To be continued*)

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A Halo for Carlyle

CARLYLE IN OLD AGE (1865-1881). *By David Alec Wilson and David Wilson MacArthur. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.* 1934. $5.

Reviewed by CHARLES FREDERICK HARROLD

HERE is the sixth and final volume of one of the most ambitious, entertaining, and disappointing of English biographies. As a monumental account of the author's hero, it began to appear in 1923, with the volume entitled "Carlyle till Marriage." There followed "Carlyle to the French Revolution" (1924), "Carlyle on Cromwell and Others" (1925), "Carlyle at his Zenith" (1927), and "Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten" (1929). The publication of "Carlyle in Old Age (1865-1881)," completed by Wilson's nephew after the author's death on April 28, 1933, presents an appropriate occasion to consider the biography in its entirety. It is not too early to attempt an approximate judgment, and to ask why, in spite of the immense human detail, the short and piquant chapters, and the author's heroic gusto, these volumes should leave, on any careful reader, a final impression of failure.

Certainly Wilson's aim was high enough. He aspired to be the Boswell of the man whom he considered, not very accurately, to be "the European Confucius." He avowed his intention of "superseding Froude," whose "Life" of Carlyle he regarded as a darkly inaccurate record joined with an eloquent and misleading interpretation. Evidently convinced that Carlyle had had enough of interpretation and needed nothing so much as a faithful recording of action and conversation, Wilson devoted virtually a lifetime to collecting all the facts, anecdotes, and legends about his subject. His nephew assures us, in a memoir in the present volume, that as a member of the Indian Civil Service in Burma, Wilson was noted for his "scrupulous honesty and close attention to the minutest details." And every page of the six substantial volumes bears witness to the author's unsparing efforts at fidelity to fact. He has levied not only upon all the standard authorities, such as Garnett, Froude, Masson, and Alexander Carlyle, but also upon scores of forgotten memoirs and biographies of men and women who knew or had even momentary contact with Carlyle, and upon innumerable anecdotes verbally related to, and verified by, "D.A.W." in his patient search for Carlyleana in England and America. All of the materials, thus assembled, combine to make a vivid, swiftly moving narrative of Carlyle's daily life. But it is chiefly an anecdotic record, rather than a great and standard interpretative biography. In spite of the popular reviewers, to whom the volumes offered delightful "Victorian stuff," and by whom the work was promptly and uncritically ranked with the masterpieces of Boswell, Lockhart, and Trevelyan, Wilson's results were in reality disappointing. His work is indeed Boswellian, in the sense that it recreates the Carlyle of conversation, argument, and prophecy; but that it supplants, as a literary work, Froude's great Rembrandtesque biography, with its remarkable unity of narrative and interpretation, of style and tone and character portrayal, many readers of the future will undoubtedly question.

They will have a number of reasons for their skepticism. In the first place, any biographer of Carlyle who hopes to "supersede Froude," should have a more distinguished style than that of Wilson, whose erratic, opinionative temperament sometimes prevents even the simplest narration from becoming effective. In addition, the future biographer—who will probably use Wilson as a valuable quarry—will realize that, for readers expecting the definitive "Life," the Carlyle of Chelsea conversations and London streets and omnibuses is simply not enough. The real Carlyle becomes for the biographer not only the man in Cheyne Row but also that part of his kaleidoscopic age against which he agonizingly took figure as he was partially accepted and partially rejected. Wilson gave us due warning, in the Preface to Volume I, that this was not to be his approach to Carlyle: "only the opening chapters deal with his surroundings. The rest is Carlyle, and *not* 'his times.'" We can only regret that he decided to include, instead, a wearisome reiteration of his hatred of Froude, and that as a consequence we know more than we desire of his opinion of "Froudacity" and look in vain for any adequate interpretation of Carlyle in relation to German literature and philosophy in his Craigenputtock period, or of Carlyle the historian, or of Carlyle the critic of Victorian economics, sociology, religion, and politics.

It would still have been possible, however, for Wilson to make the biography a very respectable literary achievement had he adhered only to the duties of the biographical annalist, and had he not intruded his own personality and point of view. He was handicapped from the start by his adoption of the role of champion. His work inevitably became a biography with a thesis, as disagreeable to the reader as Froude's was untrustworthy to Wilson. Moreover he suffered from precisely the defect which misled Froude: want of a sense of humor. In his writing he lapses into bad taste; he is arrogant toward Carlyle's critics; he indulges in exaggeration and in some astonishing caprices of judgment. We note, for example, the arrogance in his apology for omitting any discussion of Carlyle's relation to the theological changes of his day by a reference to the publication in 1913 of his own book entitled, presumptuously, "The Faith of All Sensible People," a summary of the beliefs of Thomas Carlyle and D. A. Wilson. Violations of taste usually occur when he has occasion to mention Froude, of whom he writes, with dubious wit, "He is also a bore . . . Nature and Newman together were too much for him." Frequent gratuitous judgments on Carlyle's contemporaries, seldom with any improvement of the narrative, give the work at times a peculiar and capricious quality. The wit is crotchety and often obtuse, as in the remark that Mill's essay on "Liberty" was chiefly an apology for the author's "twenty years' flirtation with" Mrs. Taylor. Hero-worship, together with Wilson's determination to vindicate Carlyle against all detractors, had so warped his judgment, never very happy in the field of literary criticism, that he was able to regard Carlyle's "French Revolution" as "a more important event than Jena or Waterloo," and to maintain that in biography Carlyle "has more than equalled Boswell's achievement," and that Carlyle's indictment of Loyola in the "Latter-Day Pamphlets" "reads like Euclid, unanswerable; a common book of science, or even Darwin's 'Origin of Species,' is hypothetic and fanciful in comparison." Obviously the author of such pronouncements was something of an eccentric, with talents which only partially qualified him for his task.

Evidences of haste are occasionally discernible throughout all six volumes. Wilson's health began to fail him when he was in the midst of his huge labor, and he was obliged to hurry. This probably accounts for the fact that some anecdotes are narrated twice.

It remains to be added that the final volume is uniform with the others in style and method. It is full of anecdote and conversation, much of it trivial and hardly worth preserving, yet some of it valuable in adding to our knowledge of Carlyle's last years. In this last period Carlyle is definitely the "Sage of Chelsea." We see him recovering from the loss of his wife, mellowing a little, yet screwing himself up occasionally to play the old role of chief castigator of Victorian charlatans, wishing for death as he more and more outlived both himself and his times, startling us by an occasional burst of modernism, as in his championing of women's freedom and even, in a manner, of birth control. One fancies that the hand of Mr. MacArthur is visible here and there, or that Wilson finally softened, incredibly, toward his *bête noire,* for there are several admissions that Froude "was probably acting in good faith" in his handling of the "Life" and the "Reminiscences."

Thus is completed the most comprehensive record of Thomas Carlyle. That it will find a permanent place in English biography is beyond doubt. But it will always suffer from the defects and peculiarities of its author's temperament, and from his unfortunate belief that Carlyle needed a champion against the over-rated errors of Froude. It will rank as a monument of loyalty rather than of insight, of industry rather than discrimination, of voluminous recording rather than of great and illuminating portraiture.

Charles Frederick Harrold is a member of the department of English at the Michigan State Normal College.

National Control

NEW GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPE. Edited by Raymond Leslie Buell. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons. 1934. $1.50.

NO one with even a passing interest in European affairs can afford to miss the wealth of information in this book. For, in a compact volume, the research associates of the Foreign Policy Association have gathered the essential facts about the governments of nine Continental nations, some of whose policies have attracted world-wide attention, and in so doing have clearly indicated both the basic theories of society behind them and the general course of their post-war development. Italy, Germany, the Baltic States, Russia, and Spain are thus presented, as experiments in the direction of national energies upon whose solution hangs the history of the future.

Most of the constitutional tenets which prevail in these countries are, of course, completely devoid of liberal sentiment and have little significance compared to the active principles of the ruling party, be it Fascist, Nazi, or Communist. A large part of the work is devoted to the careful definition of these principles, and of the preconceptions which give force to them. In each case, however, the result is a realistic description of how each nation is controlled, rather than any assessment of political ideas, and the precise authentication of each statement adds much to the strength of the exposition.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
DOROTHY L. SAYERS OMNIBUS *Miss D. L. Ibid* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Naked body in London bathtub; dead ancient in club chair; murdered artist in Scotland; *and* LORD PETER WIMSEY.	3 full length novels. A prize for new Sayers readers and worth re-reading if you know them.	Prime!
THE CASE OF NAOMI CLYNES *Sir Basil Thompson* (Doubleday, Doran: $2.)	Apparent suicide of young writer turns into murder when Inspector Richardson of Scotland Yard takes over.	Straight detecting with few literary frills. Story moves at rapid pace through London and parts of France.	Good stuff
ENTER MURDERERS *Edward Hale Bierstadt* (Doubleday, Doran: $2.50.)	Nine actual American crimes (what! No Borden case?) followed step by step from commission to execution.	Truth, as usual, is S. than F. in these satisfactorily gruesome and vividly described cases—and they're all new.	Engrossing

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A Mouthpiece for the Peasant

ODIN GROWS UP. By Olav Duun. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by PHILLIPS D. CARLETON

THIS is the fifth novel to be translated of a six-volume series dealing with the fortunes of the family of the Juvikings who came out of the darkness into history about a hundred years ago. Outwardly the story is one of the dissipation of energy, the loss of momentum, in a family stock too strongly imbued with an old pagan clannishness to fit into the conventionalized life of the countryside with its fears, superstitions, and almost painful surveillance of social action. The family breeds restless wanderers, out of place and wild, in the little fjord town, who vanish amongst America's millions or remain and drink; it also breeds domineering landowners who run the old farm—and ride roughshod across the whole township till tamed by misfortune, or by the bitter canker of some inward ill of conscience. But the old clarity of purpose is lost, and the old loyalty to the clan does not suffice in a new community that grows up about them, and the family's essential strength remains finally only in a few strong old women who dominate their lesser husbands and wait for the light.

Odin is the illegitimate son of one of these, and the hope of a new synthesis, a new rise in the family fortunes. He early shows signs of preserving the old strength and using it in the service of a new world; he is going to resolve the conflict between a vanished world and a new religion and society by turning artist (in the truest sense of the word, diktar—poet) and by making conscious the whole struggle of what is perhaps symbolic of a nation and a people.

As the series progresses, it is interesting to notice that the action in each volume becomes more and more muted, and the interest of the reader more and more centered on the character's mental and emotional growth. Odin growing up through adolescence in this book is a long cry from the old Juviking who went out into the woods with a battleaxe to kill a bear. For "Odin Grows Up" is concerned with a young man's finding of himself, casting the weight of tradition off his shoulders and standing up free and apart; he is the man who becomes "aware of himself." He has the artist's impassivity before events; he is content to measure and interpret, and this ability serves him as a weapon with which to free himself from what the family expects of him—and from a variety of emotional coils that at one time or another surround him.

What the American public will make of this particular volume is another matter. In the first place, despite an admirable recapitulation in the introduction of the first four books, the story of the family has embraced so many characters that it may seem obscure to many who have waited a year for this translation. Next, there is the question of the validity of the problem for an American audience, since the chief preoccupation of the book is with a type of tradition with which we have had little to do; certainly the question of landownership never seems to have made the mark on American mentality and character that it has on the Norwegian. And finally the book is written in a very simple, clear, but nonetheless elliptical prose that has perhaps as its nearest analogue, the New England dialect's quality of pregnant understatement and significant emphasis. But if the prospective reader would remember that this series is a mouthpiece for the peasant himself, and not a sympathetic story about the peasant by an intelligent observer, he will not be disappointed. For here the peasant (or his creator in this book) is not conscious that he represents a separate culture, or that he is the subject of dissection in a slight aura of romanticism, but is talking freely of himself and his kinfolk in his own language that requires no shifting in the setting down, and is the despair of translators, since it can not be rightfully Englished into a dialect, and yet is far too free for our ordinary colloquialisms.

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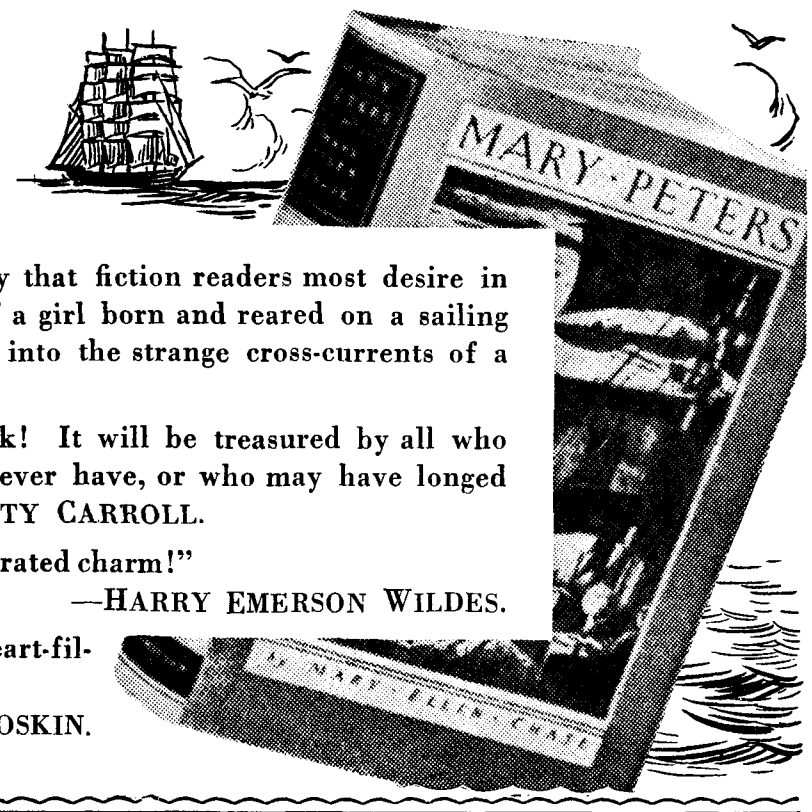

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The New Books

Drama

THE ENGLISH FOLK-PLAY. By E. K. Chambers. Oxford University Press. 1934. $3.75.

The peculiar fascination of the folk-drama known as the Mummer's Play arises not from its literary qualities or its clumsy humor, but from its relation to religious ceremonial. Consciously or unwittingly, the folk-actors who have kept the play alive from a remote pagan antiquity down to our own time are to be regarded as the custodians of an ominous ritual. The original purpose of this was to insure the fertility of the fields through the use of "sympathetic magic." The primitive worshipper assumed that by putting to death some representative of the principle of life and subsequently reviving him,—or by pretending to do so,—he could bring about a similar act upon the part of the mighty powers that govern the world. Thus the death of one of the antagonists in the Mummers' Play, and his subsequent resuscitation, are "survivals of ceremonies intended to promote agricultural fertility." Even in its most decadent and fantastic extant forms, therefore, the play contains a hint of an original religious reverence.

For the last thirty years the classic exposition of this dramatic phenomenon has been a brilliant cluster of chapters in Sir Edmund Chambers's "Mediaeval Stage." In that place the author fully investigated every aspect of the subject, with richly documented learning; but he then had at his disposal only twenty-nine examples of the play itself. Meanwhile the number of recorded texts has been increased to well over a hundred, a fair proportion of which show variants in content and in verbal expression requiring fresh elucidation. In the new volume now before us Chambers offers a complete review not only of the multiplied versions of the Mummers' Play itself, but of certain analogous plays from other countries than England.

Although the author is confronted with a greatly increased body of detail, his present exposition of the subject actually gains in lucidity over that of thirty years ago. This result is achieved in part through the happy device of presenting at the outset a "normalized text" of the play, constructed with reassuring simplicity by Sir Edmund Chambers himself. With this simplified version of the play in his mind from the beginning, the reader moves with a minimum of confusion through the details cited from the authentic texts in the subsequent chapters. Of the texts themselves four are printed *in extenso*. To the expert probably the most arresting new aspects of the treatise will be these: (1) the contention that the theme of wooing is not a primitive element in the Mummers' Play; (2) the judicial exploration of a possible relationship between the Doctor of this play and the *Unguentarius* of the Church drama; (3) the ample and illuminating demonstration of influences upon the folk-play from English literature and the professional stage; and (4) the study of analogous plays still surviving in the Balkans. To the layman the new volume offers the allurement of a curious aspect of cultural history, treated with a masterly simplicity and an easy urbanity.

K. Y.

Fiction

WIFE TO CALIBAN. By Louise Redfield Peattie. Minton, Balch. 1934. $2.

The central problem of this novel is handled admirably by Mrs. Peattie. It could very easily have been presented cheaply or objectionably, instead of with the delicacy and force that the author attains. During the earlier pages this delicacy has the effect of setting the action behind a softening screen, and as a result there is some slowness and a frequent impression of the dim and the remote. But as the book proceeds, the action comes closer to the foreground, speeds its tempo, and in the final eighty-five pages gains a real momentum. Taken as a whole, "Wife to Caliban" has qualities not easily or quickly forgotten.

Crispin de Castro, wealthy and middle-aged, a hunchback from early boyhood, marries a young English girl and takes her to his sumptuous old home, named "Les Illusions," on the southern coast of France. His instincts are all to save her from sexual intercourse with himself, for he fears that where she is content to be the mistress of his home, anything further will lose her to him forever. Not many months after the marriage, Denis Coult, a callous young Englishman, is a guest at the de Castro home. The triangle that is set up by Denis's visit is destroyed only at the end of the novel.

The main and subordinate characters are delivered to us skilfully. The struggles of wife and husband to find themselves, to make adjustment to each other, come gradually to be a moving and absorbing spectacle. When at the end, bravery and wisdom have won, we have a gratifying sense of release, of rightness rationally achieved. That is no small tribute to the artistry of the author.

R. B. M.

CRACK OF DOOM. By Hugh Edwards. Bobbs-Merrill. 1934. $2.

The younger British novelists must all have their saga these days, even though it be stuffed with nothing more substantial than cream-puffs. Mr. Edwards places his in the West Indies, a part of the world in which he passed some of his army service. The high romantic point of each of three generations is set against three tragic moments in the history of the islands—an earthquake in Jamaica, that end-of-the-world afternoon when the ashes from Mt. Pelée shut out the sun in the Barbadoes, and back to Jamaica again and another earthquake. Mr. Edwards has a penchant for beautiful young men who kiss with a kind of fierce sadness and he writes with a pretty romantic touch of dancing floors and violins, lacy sunshades and little notes, of palms, bathing places, and light amours.

HOLY WEDNESDAY. Manuel Galvez. Appleton-Century. 1934. $2.

For want of a clearer definition "Holy Wednesday" must be called a novel, but a novel it is not. It is possible that pruned of superfluous words it might make a sort of sketch, barely a short story, but it is more likely that it would always remain a tract, thinly disguised as fiction. It purports to tell of a spiritual struggle occurring in the soul of a priest of unusually saintly life, who is obsessed by a sense of sin,—and it endeavors to give a panoroma of human weakness as it appears from the vantage point of the confessional. Here, no doubt, is a remarkable idea. But the author has neglected its possibilities, he has inflated it into a would-be grandiose impersonality, failed to make of it intense and compact drama. The people who pass before the confessional are given no deep bearing on the priest's own spiritual problem, but are merely a catalogue list of the deadly sins, and in the end the grand crescendo and climax blare out with a tone that is falsely loud, hollow, melodramatic, and incredibly old-fashioned.

The book has the usual curious flatness of style of a translation, and perhaps it is the translation that sets up an opaque barrier between the printed word and the reader's mind, dulling what may have been an original sharpness.

C. C.

BABOUK. By Guy Endore. Vanguard. 1934. $2.

It is a curious work which Mr. Endore has written about the horrors of the slave trade and of slave life on the French colonial plantations of what is now Haiti, and about the final revolt of the blacks against their white masters—history, fiction, and the author's rhetorical apostrophes to the universe jumbled together; patient research and sound handling here, and there bombast; the general effect, in spite of vivid passages, rather heavy-handed and turgid.

The author brings his African hero over in a slave-ship and follows him through various punishments and humiliations, until, a grizzle-headed, scowling, brutalized negro of middle-age, he leads the rising of the blacks in his part of the island,

(*Continued on page* 148)

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A WOMAN AT THIRTY *Ernest Pascal* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Novel	Career vs. Love in a "s'phisticated" and intelligently written time-killer.	First-rate
MOTHER OF FIVE *Henrietta Leslie* (Minton, Balch: $2.)	Novel	The Five Petts, variety artists, were the sons of Leah, The Gal on the Flying Trapeze. One of the five different fathers was a lion tamer.	Grease paint
SLOW VISION *Maxwell Bodenheim* (Macaulay: $2.)	Novel	Two young lower middle class lovers are moved through the depression in New York and Boston between the author's soap-box speeches.	Not so good
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The PHŒNIX NEST

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

UPON my return to New York I have found several letters of gossip from correspondents in various parts of the country. *Eleanor Allen,* for instance, of Portland, Oregon, tells me that she has a daily radio hour in Portland and features readings from outstanding poets. She also has an operetta to be acted by puppets, which is intended for children. The musical score for it is being written by *Mary Evelene Calbreath,* the well-known composer. She also has three children's novels ready for publishers, all of which have appeared in serial form and two of which have been syndicated. If any publisher wishes to know her address, it is 715 Oregonian Building. Miss Allen says that there is a strong poetry group in Portland, including *Howard McKinley Corning, Verne Bright, Ethel Romig Fuller,* and others. The versatile Miss Allen also interests herself in concert managing, writing news stories, radio continuity, and has a new novel "Indian Drums," based on the life of old *Chief Joseph,* the famous Nez Perce chieftain. . . . *Elizabeth Whittemore Keith* of the other Portland—Portland, Maine—tells me that way down East the judicious know that one of the best-informed people with whom to discuss books and kindred subjects is *Charles Campbell,* now head of the book department of Loring, Short and Harmon's, an old Portland firm. His choice as a vice-president of the American Booksellers Association, she pronounces, is a very fitting one. As to authors up in Maine, of course there's *Booth Tarkington* whose summer home is at Kennebunkport, and, as one drives to Quebec over the Arnold Highway, says Mrs. Keith, "the ghosts of *Kenneth Roberts's* 'Rabble in Arms' people the banks of the Kennebec and Chaudiere. A lively wire-haired terrier of my affections led me to read an article by Mr. Roberts in the *Saturday Evening Post* concerning his dogs, and I was interested to find that the old Englishman who plucks the aforesaid terrier most expertly at the Dirigo Kennels in Saco, was once associated with Mr. Roberts in a kennel venture." My correspondent also avers that "As the Earth Turns" could only have been written by one brought up in a New England farming community. *Gladys Hasty Carroll* has been a recent visitor to Maine. Of course *Robert P. Tristram Coffin,* who has lately accepted the chair of English Literature at Bowdoin College, is another native son; and Blue Hill, about thirty miles from Bar Harbor, was the childhood home of *Mary Ellen Chase* and the scene of "The Goodly Heritage." Miss Chase's "Silver Shell," a juvenile, is laid on one of the islands along the coast of Maine. *Flora Lamb* of the Mosher Press published the catalogue lately sent out by *Curtis Hidden Page,* and Mrs. Keith says that the bookshop at 45 Exchange Street is still one of the nicest places in which to spend an idle hour. Everything is arranged just as *Mr. Mosher* was accustomed to have it and Miss Lamb, who was Mr. Mosher's secretary for twenty-seven years, is in charge of the shop and publishing business. The books issued are reprints of those Mr. Mosher selected for which there is still a demand, and in addition Miss Lamb creates in the Mosher manner beautiful examples of book-making. Speaking of bookshops, five years ago Portland "entertained an angel unawares" when *Erskine Caldwell* ran the Longfellow Bookshop there for a couple of years. "There was a very discriminating list of books in the shop and Mrs. Caldwell was most often in charge. She was a delightful person to meet. I remember being shown a story of Mr. Caldwell's in, I think, an English magazine published in Paris, and finding it a most unexpected fancy for the mind of the reserved, dignified young man with whom I had discussed poetry occasionally." That must have been a story in a copy of *transition* or *This Quarter.* You never can tell about the unexpected fancies of the private minds of young writers! . . . *Jesse Stuart,* the solitary, clannish, apprehensive young poet who lives on a Kentucky farm and is just having his "Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow" published by Dutton, wrote the original manuscript of his book in longhand on red horse tobacco sacks, shoe boxes, pieces of wall-paper, sugar sacks, "some on wood—and many were written on poplar leaves when I was out in the woods and one came to me. I took a little stick and traced the words on the leaf, carried it in, held it between the lamp and me, and typed it off. Poetry burns my brain when I write it and I dread the heat of it." I cannot resist quoting even further from what Mr. Stuart has told his publishers:

> Part of it was written in the barnyard, part of it was written under some oak trees back of the house—one third of it was written behind mules hitched to the plow—a portion was written in the Plum Grove graveyard, and was written there at night too, in June and May when the roses were blooming. It seemed like I could get in closer touch with the dead and write about them, not for the intention of having the verse published and making a name for myself and perhaps a few dollars. Not that at all. . . . My parents fondled over my book [when the published volume came] like it was a young baby and marveled at me "writing a book." They think people in far-off lands with long sets of grey whiskers write books, like I used to think.

Dane Coolidge, author of so many "Westerns," is "trying to get the price of a Ford for a trip to Arizona this fall"; *Dhan Gopal Mukerji* says his summer in New York was as hot as India and that ice cream was no help; *Margaret Fishback,* that gay writer of delightful verse, says she had a perfectly lovely vacation, "spent it one Saturday afternoon at Jones Beach, with dinner at Henri's on my return to New York. Now I am back on the job at Macy's, completely refreshed and ready for a winter of hard work. Later I hope to go south for a spell, possibly as far as Washington Square. The winters are so tough up here in the coat and pants district that it's nice to get away for a while in January." . . . *Paul Engle,* whose "American Song" still sells like a leading novel, has obliviously been taking a walking trip through Germany and the Tyrol before returning to Oxford. . . . Twelve chapters of an unfinished light novel by *D. H. Lawrence,* "Mr. Noon," will be published by the Viking Press in October. . . . *Francis Hackett,* reading galleys of his biography of *Francis I,* both horrified and delighted his publishers by ripping the galleys to pieces and writing some hundred pages of new material. Mr. Hackett has been working on his namesake for more than six years, but now the publishers, Doubleday, Doran, have the book ready to appear this autumn.

The title of *Bob Benchley's* latest opus, announced by Harper's for Fall publication is, characteristically, "From Bed to Worse, or Comforting Thoughts about the Bison!" . . . *Sidney Franklin's* translation of the *Lugin* novel has survived changes of publication date and Scribner's have now brought it out. . . . . *Anna Marilla Gregory* sends me the following with a catch in it. It is a self-explanatory problem of rearrangement, and I hope you may be able to rearrange the poem so that it makes perfect sense. It is quite possible so to do:

PUNCTUATION

I saw a peacock with a fiery tail.
I saw a comet drop down hail.
I saw a cloud twined with ivy round.
I saw an oak crawl on the ground.
I saw a spider swallow a whale.
I saw the sea brim-full of ale.
I saw a phial glass fifteen yards deep.
I saw a well full of men's tears they weep.
I saw a man's eyes all on a flaming fire.
I saw a house high as the moon or higher.
I saw the blazing sun at midnight.
I saw a man who saw this wondrous sight!

Edgar Johnson, author of "Unweave A Rainbow," has just returned from vacationing on Lake Champlain, where he has almost completed the book on biography he has been working on. He will be giving a series of lectures on the Analysis of Satire at the New School for Social Research on Wednesday evenings at 8:00 o'clock. The first lecture, on October 3rd, will discuss the psychology of the satirist.

After two years of intensive work *J. U. Nicolson's* translation into modern English of *Chaucer's* "Canterbury Tales" has been completed and will be published by Covici, Friede on November 5th. According to the publishers it is the first complete, unexpurgated *Chaucer* to be issued in one volume. The book will be 680 pages in length and will contain 85 illustrations by *Rockwell Kent* and an introduction by *Professor Gordon Hall Gerould,* Chaucerian scholar of Princeton University.

Doubleday, Doran
announce 4 books
of particular importance:

Kate O'Brien's
THE ANTEROOM

The author of *Without My Cloak* — Hawthornden Prize Winner — writes a beautiful Irish novel of three days of crisis in the lives of the Mulqueens of Mellick. $2.50

William McFee's
MORE HARBOURS OF MEMORY

Mellow, leisurely reflections on ports and people from a deep sea wanderer's past. A book of rich enjoyment from the author of *Command.* $2.50

Omar Khayyam
by
HAROLD LAMB

This portrait of Omar—scholar, adventurer, and little-known poet of one of the world's best known classics—is sure to take high place among the imaginative biographies of our time. By the author of *Genghis Khan.* $2.50

Franz Anton
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If you read *Christina of Sweden,* you will know with what incisive understanding and readable charm MARGARET GOLDSMITH now tells the story of the founder of modern psychotherapy. A strange, enthralling life-story which is also sound history of Mesmerism. $2.50

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ARE you one of those who have always thought of "architecture" as "decoration"—something to disguise a shell of walls, floors, and ceilings? If so, you have a great adventure before you, because—as Charles Harris Whitaker proves in this remarkable book—*architecture is the record of human life itself.* Much of the architecture we call "modern" is as old as the pyramids, or older.

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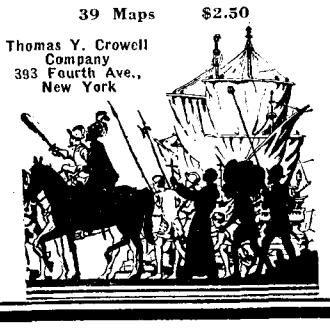


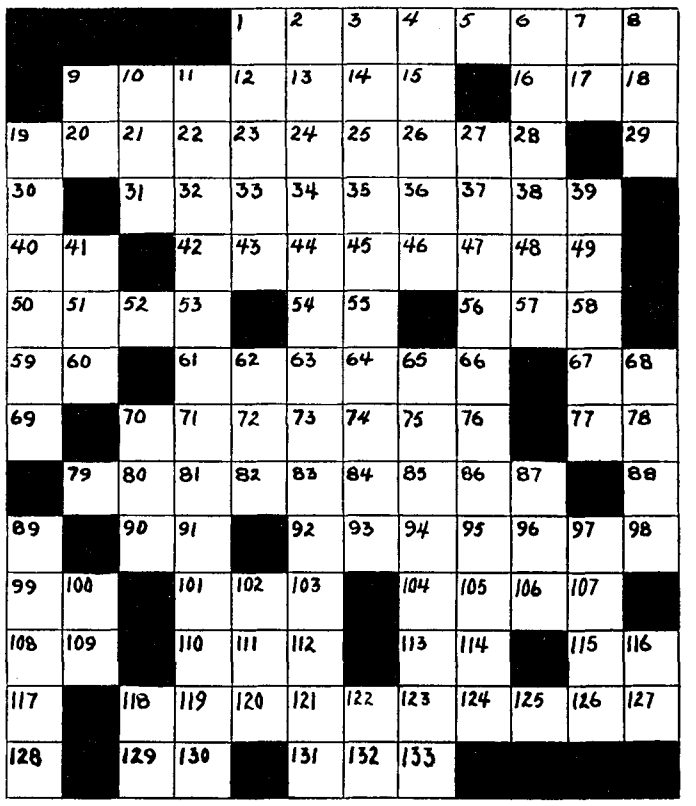
Double-Crostics: Number 27

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-three words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered (these numbers appear at the beginning of each definition) and you are thereby able to tell how many letters are in the required word. When you have guessed a word each letter is to be written in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

Either before (preferably) or after placing the letters in their squares you should write the words you have guessed on the blank lines which appear to the right in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter. The initial letters of this list of words spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
I. 120-89-30-2-117-128. Banters, makes fun of.	_ _ _ _ _ _
II. 111-40-73-121-33-83. Blunt; slow-witted.	_ _ _ _ _ _
III. 43-72-9-36-19-61. Constitutional; consumptive.	_ _ _ _ _ _
IV. 17-81-76-50. Norse goddess of fate.	_ _ _ _
V. 85-23-63-34-116-98-124-103. A salt of vitriol.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
VI. 115-77-38-102. A Mary Roberts Rinehart character.	_ _ _ _
VII. 11-127-31-41-21-133-100. Everlasting.	_ _ _ _ _ _
VIII. 51-47-105-22. Eager, greedy, voracious.	_ _ _ _
IX. 10-44-70-90-108-68-65-112. Gaunt, emaciated.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
X. 27-104-16-97-132. Once and again.	_ _ _ _ _
XI. 39-5-101-45-25-60. Courage; natural ardor.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XII. 125-93-6-32-26-110-13. Expostulate.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XIII. 107-126-84-92. To cease to have.	_ _ _ _
XIV. 106-95-1-14-49-28. Scowling, gloomy.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XV. 129-74-131-12. Units of electrical resistance.	_ _ _ _
XVI. 119-67-71-57-99-88. Town in Massachusetts.	_ _ _ _ _ _
XVII. 64-24-15-87-35-48-8. Lariat thrower.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XVIII. 118-52-79-46-96-130-86-123-78. Defective.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
XIX. 59-80-113-56-54-66-91. Sedative.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _
XX. 53-20-62-69-7. To escape by artifice.	_ _ _ _ _
XXI. 114-37-82-4. Cleft, fissure, crevice	_ _ _ _
XXII. 55-29-94-109. A petty quarrel.	_ _ _ _
XXIII. 58-3-42-122-75-18. Gaped; stood wide open.	_ _ _ _ _ _



SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC
(NUMBER 26)

THOMSON—"THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE"

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.
Here languid Beauty kept her pale-faced court.

The New Books

(*Continued from page* 146)

and with his mistress's baby impaled on a pike for a standard, finally dies as he blocks a cannon with his chest, shouting to his followers that he will keep the ball from flying out.

Mr. Endore has evidently read Moreau de Saint-Méry and various other source-books, and he makes a really admirable effort to keep his blacks simple Africans. That Babouk, after a lifetime near the Cape, where cannon were certainly not a rarity, should fancy that he could stop a cannon ball with his chest, is typical of this sincerity. On the other hand, Babouk is always a symbol rather than an individual, there is little of the sensuous feel of the Haitian scene, and the author makes no bones of the fact that he is writing a work of propaganda—an indignant blast against the white man's treatment of the black, with an incidental leaning toward a vague sort of communism.

Every now and then, throughout the story, Mr. Endore emerges, somewhat after the fashion of Carlyle in his "French Revolution," to launch rhetorical questions or a paragraph of apostrophic irony anent some incident just related. These interpolations are always jarring, in the nature of things, but at the conclusion of his tragic story the novelist goes quite hay-wire with a three or four page chant, in which, a paragraph for each sentence, we are told of the ultimate black uprising that will usher in, apparently, a sort of racial utopia.

> Some day the Negro's tomtom will truly be dreadful to hear. It will come out of the forest and beat down the streets of our cities. TOM-TOM! TOM-TOM! TOM-TOM!

and so on. Babouk's story has epic possibilities, and it's a pity Mr. Endore doesn't stick to his novelist's job and leave the preaching for somebody else.

HEART, BE STILL. By Isabel Wilder. Coward-McCann. 1934. $2.

This tale is old-fashioned in motive and purely feminine in feeling and approach, a direct descendant of "The Wide, Wide World" and "Little Women." It deals with the familiar conflict between family loyalties and duty to self. The setting is an American university town and more narrowly the home of that engaging and popular professor, Hewitt Dunn. He is more a shepherd of youth than a scholar, or at least seems doomed to sacrifice academic advancement to the personal contacts of teacher and student. This estranges him from an ambitious wife, and the real center of the household is his daughter Celia, in her twenties still home body and father-worshiper. She is her father's chief servant and companion and asks to be nothing more.

Into this quiet pool splashes suddenly the reckless adventurer and egotist Gibbs Henderson, who plans for a year at Newton as a useful take-off for his career. He is picturesque, flamboyant, irresistible. The professor at once falls under his spell, and so, more reluctantly, does Celia. But he has no notion of marriage, and soon draws back for fear of being bound. Nothing after all has happened between them but a few kisses and embraces, and poor Celia's inability to settle down to her old routine.

So without special talent or objective she makes for New York, gets a job, and loses it when the depression sets in. Then she is back in the middle of the old quandary. With no new work in sight, she has the choice of return to Newton and insignificance, or marriage to a good youth who bids fair to become in time another Hewitt Dunn, at best. We leave her contentedly yielding herself to the good young man; preparing to arrange a new family setting in which, we foresee, her daughters will presently be confronting the same problem she has striven so furiously to solve.

The tale is a "wholesome" one in the old-fashioned sense of keeping discreetly within certain bounds of feeling and expression; is less than wholesome from the new-fashioned point of view because it fails to keep emotion clear of sentimentalism. As for its people, they are unmistakably like people we all know, but not one of them rises above the verisimilitude of the given type.

H. W. B.

Miscellaneous

IT'S UP TO US. By James P. Warburg. Knopf. 1934. $2.

This is a fighting book, and in many respects it is the best kind of fighting book; for it is pugnacious without being rancorous, and snappy without being flippant. Mr. Warburg does not hesitate to put a large verdict, when possible, in a few crisp words; but he never does this without giving clear and forceful reasons for the verdict. That the reasons are always conclusive would be too much to say; but they are always substantial, and as comprehensive as can be expected in a little book on a great subject. The value of the book, in its author's mind, consists equally in its destructive criticism of current procedures and tendencies and in its constructive proposals. It is the latter, of course, which are pointed to in the title; but Mr. Warburg has the courage to quote with unqualified approval John W. Davis's remark, apropos of the New Deal: "It is not quite clear why any one who sees his friend driving towards a precipice must wait to warn him until he can produce a road map of his own."

Mr. Warburg sees us driving, under New Deal auspices, sometimes towards one, and sometimes towards another, of two precipices. One of these is inflation, which, though dark with disaster, would be compatible with ultimate preservation of the fundamentals of our institutions; the other is the omnipotent state, which, whether communist or fascist, would mean the death of liberty and individuality. The way in which some of the Roosevelt policies are headed towards inescapable and ruinous inflation and others towards an all-embracing governmentalism is brought out with great skill and in vivid and familiar language. The groundwork for all this is laid in the opening pages—perhaps the best in the book—particularly those in which it is shown that, in its actual working, the National Industrial Recovery Act "is not a recovery measure at all, but a measure of reform."

On the constructive side, the book has, in the opinion of the present reviewer, one serious fault. Mr. Warburg sets forth a great number of important improvements—in laws, in administration, in customs, in public sentiment, in private conduct—which he holds to be necessary for the restoration of prosperity and the avoidance of future cataclysms. Whatever the merits of these several proposals, they are far too numerous to find effective lodgment in the mind of any ordinary reader; and they are put forward with little or no attempt to bring out the vital necessity of a few and the subordinate importance of the others. If "it's up to us"—as Mr. Warburg insists it is—to grapple with all these questions, and to make sure of obtaining representatives who will vote right upon them, then we, the people of the United States, have a job on our hands tougher than was ever contemplated by the framers of the Constitution, and tougher than there is the faintest reason to hope we shall ever tackle. F. F.

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Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MISS LOVEMAN, c/o *The Saturday Review*. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

A LIBRARY FOR TEN DOLLARS

J. M. of alas I know not where, since the return envelope which doubtless accompanied her note has gone the way of all perverse papers, and her letter contains no address, is about to enter on the great adventure of building a library. She wants a list of books which can be purchased for ten dollars. "I am," she writes, "a seventeen-year-old girl and would like books of lasting value which might form the basis of a personal library."

"OH, frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!" I chortled in my joy at this heaven-sent opportunity to recommend the best dollar's worth of delight in the world. For if anyone knows how to get more sheer pleasure for that small sum than by coming into possession of the Modern Library Giant which houses all Jane Austen's novels I'd like to know the way. What could be a better cornerstone for a young girl's library than the works of the incomparable Jane? I can still see myself sitting entranced over PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, when first it fell into my hands, regretful as each page was finished that there was one less to read, and turning, the moment the last had been completed, to begin at the first again. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE to acquire the taste, then EMMA, PERSUASION, and NORTHANGER ABBEY, and after that even the others, though less absorbing, will prove irresistible. Ten dollars will go a long way in building a library when a single bill will purchase so much, and there are so many excellent reprint editions of other old and new classics available. I don't know what sort of a library J. M. has to fall back on in the family shelves, but I should think, even if it's duplication, she ought to have Shakespeare, VANITY FAIR, and DAVID COPPERFIELD on her own. The last two are available at seventy cents apiece in the Everyman's Library edition (Dutton); there's a heaven for you at low cost. Grosset & Dunlap issues a dollar edition of Shakespeare which not only contains the complete works but the notes entire of the Temple Shakespeare. And for seventy cents again in the Everyman's Library edition is to be had one of the best anthologies of English verse (and their number is legion so this is no slight distinction), no other than Palgrave's GOLDEN TREASURY. But to get down to something more modern. There's no better recent biography for a girl like J. M. to choose than Lytton Strachey's QUEEN VICTORIA (Blue Ribbon Books: $1) which certainly should interest her in the period which is the background of so much of the literature which might well be added to her shelves as they grow. Then, since for ten dollars she must limit herself rigidly in the number of books she buys, she might add to her selection two excellent recent omnibus collections, THE TRAVELLER'S LIBRARY (Doubleday, Doran: $2.50), edited by W. Somerset Maugham, and AN AMERICAN OMNIBUS (Doubleday, Doran: $2.75), edited by Carl Van Doren. Here she will find examples of some of the outstanding work of contemporary times—in the first volume Arnold Bennett's OLD WIVES TALE, Swinnerton's NOCTURNE, Max Beerbohm's THE HAPPY HYPOCRITE, David Garnett's LADY INTO FOX, Conrad's YOUTH, Wells's THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, E. M. Forster's THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS, and short stories by D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, to mention but a trio of names, and poetry and essays by the leading English writers of both. AN AMERICAN OMNIBUS will give her Booth Tarkington's ALICE ADAMS, Don Marquis's ARCHY AND MEHITABEL, Robert Nathan's AUTUMN, stories by Ring Lardner, Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, and others, and poetry by such authors as Edna St. Vincent Millay, Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, the Benéts, and Elinor Wylie.

Sixty-five cents still to be spent! Add a nickel to it, and the Everyman's Library ILIAD to the shelf. I don't pretend to present this list to J. M. as a model one by any manner of means. Probably some of its titles are downstairs in the family library. But all of these a girl should rejoice to have as personal possessions where she could lay hands on them at will, and where when she had had enough of a present-day writer she could turn to one of the great writers of an older time, or where, having for the nonce had enough of them, she could find something of her own day on which to regale herself.

THE CHANGING AMERICAN SCENE

E. C. of Rumson, N. J., says that the Literature Department of the Woman's Club of which she is chairman is taking up for study "Literature of Revolt" under the general topic of The Changing American Scene as Shown in Literature. In connection with this program she wants a list of "revolt" books covering moral, political, sociological, and economic revolt, and the revolt of youth, as well as a book or two which could be used as a sort of textbook for general background.

Revolt really came into the open in recent American literature after the war when the disgruntled youth of the country began pouring out its disillusionment in such books as Scott Fitzgerald's THIS SIDE OF PARADISE, John Dos Passos's THREE SOLDIERS, Ernest Hemingway's stories and novels, Floyd Dell's MOON-CALF, and Sherwood Anderson's WINESBURG, OHIO. Anderson was older than most of the rest of the disillusioned, but he was quite as much in revolt as they, while of course first and foremost in the attack on the smugness of American life was Sinclair Lewis with MAIN STREET which loosed a flood of derogatory characterization of American life. Much of the moral revolt is to be found in such novels as the foregoing. They worked off the first emotional protest of the intelligentsia against conditions, and inevitably after a time lost their impetus. The later phases of reform in America have been more social and political. For discussion along these lines E. C. can turn with advantage to the books of George Soule, A PLANNED SOCIETY and THE COMING AMERICAN REVOLUTION (Macmillan), both stimulating analyses of conditions and possibilities; Mauritz Hallgren's SEEDS OF REVOLT (Knopf), a study of American life and the temper of the American people during the depression; Stuart Chase's A NEW DEAL (Macmillan), an argument for economic planning under the direction of technologists; and the collection of articles by authors of note gathered together by Charles A. Beard under the title AMERICA FACES THE FUTURE (Houghton Mifflin). There is about to appear a volume by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace called NEW FRONTIERS (Reynal & Hitchcock) which sets forth the ideals and faith of the Roosevelt administration, and there has just been published a compilation edited by Alfred M. Bingham and Selden Rodman, entitled A CHALLENGE TO THE NEW DEAL (Falcon Press), which presents the opinions of thirty-five well known radicals on American problems.

THE SCIENCE OF SEX

W. H. M. of Chicago, Ill., is in search of a book on sex that takes up principally the biological side. He asks for several suggestions among which to choose.

H. M. Parshley's THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN REPRODUCTION (Norton) and H. S. Jennings's THE BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF HUMAN NATURE (Norton) cover the field so well that W. H. M. would be quite safe in getting either of them. Two or three years ago there appeared a work entitled THE SCIENCE OF LIFE (Doubleday, Doran), which was a collaboration between H. G. Wells and Julian Huxley, which in its discussion affords so comprehensive an examination into the subject that if W. H. M. secures that he will need no further suggestions.

WHAT THE YOUNGER MEN THINK

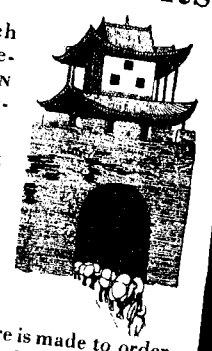
From the Baltic States, through M. G. N. of New York City comes a request for a book setting forth the ideals of Youth in America today.

The best book I can think of from which this correspondent can draw the information she wants is CHALLENGE TO THE NEW DEAL (Falcon Press), which I mentioned in a foregoing paragraph. The work is edited by two of the most vocal of the younger radicals, Alfred M. Bingham and Selden Rodman, and contains discussions of the America of today, together with suggestions for the future by thirty-five radicals, some of them older than the editors, such men as Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and George Soule, and others belonging to the youthful group. Among these latter are John Chamberlain and William Harlan Hale. There is no better book that I know of in which to find the opinion of the younger generation.

A Literary discovery

Each publishing season has its "dark horse"

—that book which emerges out of the welter of new publications because it is unique of its kind. TURKESTAN REUNION is such a book. Already critics and writers everywhere are praising it.



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Publishers, 386 Fourth Avenue, *New York*

NOW IN NOVEMBER
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The Inner Sanctum has referred to the growing intimations of immortality which have gathered around the publication of *Now in November*, a new novel by MISS JOSEPHINE JOHNSON.

Here is the evidence:

Among the critics, editors, novelists, other publishers and men and women of letters who have already paid homage to *Now In November* are

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER
WILLIAM KNICKERBOCKER
JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
THEODORE MORRISON
HERSCHEL BRICKELL
LOUIS UNTERMEYER
STANLEY RINEHART
WILLIAM SOSKIN
LEWIS GANNETT
EDWARD WEEKS
HARRY HANSEN
MAXWELL ALEY
HERVEY ALLEN
EVELYN SCOTT
JOHN FARRAR

Among the authors to whom JOSEPHINE JOHNSON has already been compared (not by *The Inner Sanctum*, but by readers and reviewers) are

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS
GLADYS HASTY CARROLL
KATHERINE MANSFIELD
EMILY DICKINSON
EMILY BRONTE
WILLA CATHER
O. E. RÖLVAAG
PEARL BUCK

The Inner Sanctum has already reported that when DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER read the advance proofs of *Now In November* she found herself asking if this wasn't the American *Wuthering Heights*. "Chapter after chapter is charged with that Brontë-like, before-a-storm tension, something of the same vitality, other-worldly rather than human . . ."

This judgment is corroborated by that of JOHN FARRAR of *Farrar and Rinehart:*

"I'd like to wager that first edition copies of JOSEPHINE JOHNSON'S NOW IN NOVEMBER *will one day be worth as much as those of any living American writer."*

And the unanimous verdict of New York's book critics:

"Of the beauty that is in this book it is hard to write—quotation might convey it—" —JOHN CHAMBERLAIN in *The New York Times*

"It is almost incredible that this book, so mellow in its philosophy, so rich in its poetic texture, should be the work of a girl of twenty-four. It is a book that sings."
—LEWIS GANNETT in *The New York Herald Tribune*

"Planned with subtle appreciation of effects, written in melodious, restrained prose. Writing that is lovely to contemplate."
—HARRY HANSEN in *The New York World-Telegram*

"Terror and beauty perfectly conveyed. It is quiet and intense at the same time."
—HERSCHEL BRICKELL in *The New York Evening Post*

Ask your bookseller for a copy of *Now In November*, by JOSEPHINE JOHNSON. He may still have a first edition. *The Inner Sanctum* hasn't, except two copies inscribed by the author, and lodged forever in the innermost affections of

ESSANDESS

NEXT WEEK
The **TENTH ANNIVERSARY NUMBER** *of*
The Saturday Review

Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

☞Harry Scherman of the Book of the Month Club says that in Russia the great hobby is dropping in parachutes. In the Park of Culture and Rest in Moscow (or is it Leningrad?) there's a tower built for the purpose, from which people leap off, landing with a bump. The publishing business in America has been doing that for some time. ☞News item from Germany: A usually peaceable bear in a zoo, maddened by continuous radio nearby, attacked his mate and killed her. ☞We know just how he felt. ☞Old Quercus changed over from Chesterfields to Luckies for a week, just to see what would happen. ☞Results negligible so far. ☞In one of the Cup Race broadcasts we were pleased to hear one of the *Moran* tugs mentioned—our favorite towboats. ☞When the Quercuses commute on Long Island they console delays by reminding themselves that the L. I. R. R. has Philadelphia blood in it. See those little tablets on the cars stating that some bank in Philly owns the creeping stock. ☞Old Henry Adams, the fellow who was Educated, had a burst of optimism just at the end of his famous book. He suggested (writing in 1907) that perhaps by 1938 we might have "a world that sensitive natures could regard without a shudder." ☞We'd better get busy.

⁂ ⁂

☞On one of his rare visits to the movies Old Quercus noted that *Friends of Mr. Sweeney*, that gay book by Elmer Davis, has gone into the pictures. Good! ☞Thanks to Mr. Franklin Ludington we now have a copy of Part II of Jules Verne's grand old work *The Steam House* (it is imprinted by Scribner, 1881). Part I we still desiderate. Perhaps John Skinner of Albany, a Jules Verne enthusiast, can help us? ☞We look forward to *Life à la Henri* (Simon & Schuster). Henri is the famous M. Charpentier, of Lynbrook (L. I.) and Rockefeller City, who invented *Crêpes Suzette*. M. Fadiman of S. & S. has written us a letter in French saying that without reservations he considers it the most delightful book they have ever published. ☞But go to Henri's place and try to get in "without reservations." ☞M. Rockefeller, we hope, is going to give Henri some more space. ☞Like all really good cooks, Henri prepares every autumn enough pancake batter to last all winter. Batter up! ☞In a crock near the front door, where you can whiff it as you go by, he keeps the sauce (orange juice, butter, sugar, curaçao, brandy) which felicitated the last years of Edward VII. ☞We are very weary of hearing about Vitamins. We always enjoyed Peanut Butter but are distressed to see the White Rose brand announcing "Each pound of our Peanut Butter contains 250 Units of Vitamin D." ☞And here's the Union News Co., which runs those grand Oyster Bars, quoting the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries that oysters contain "200 times as much iodine as milk, eggs or beefsteak . . . high proportion of glycogen . . . 136% of the iron man needs daily." ☞But doesn't the American public eat anything just because it tastes good? ☞If old Quercus wants 136% of iron he goes to an ironmonger. ☞The selecting committee of the Book of the Month Club always eat oysters at their monthly meeting, which perhaps accounts for their choices. ☞We hear that the Literary Guild has gone to live with Nelson Doubleday.

⁂ ⁂

☞Mr. Clip Boutell of our Promotion Department tells us that 184 booksellers are now selling (not giving away) *The Saturday Review* every week. 45 of these are in New York City, the rest well scattered over the country. ☞Next week, by the way, *The Saturday Review* will publish its Tenth Anniversary issue: a good time to begin subscribing. ☞Helen Dean Fish has done a fine job in her *Children's Almanac of Books* which lists, in calendar sequence, the best books written for children with the appropriate dates. It was July 4, 1862, for instance, when the young Oxford tutor took the three Liddell children for a row on the river which started *Alice in Wonderland*. ☞It was Sept. 4, 1893, when Beatrix Potter wrote a story-letter to a sick boy which grew later into *Peter Rabbit*. ☞It was June 1, 1896, when the Pratt Institute Free Library, Brooklyn, opened the first Children's Room in any library. ☞It was July 20, 1879, when the first *Uncle Remus* story appeared in the Atlanta *Constitution*. ☞These and many other interesting items are listed in Miss Fish's delightful almanac, which is published (25 cents) by Frederick A. Stokes Company, 443 Fourth Avenue. ☞She hasn't been able to find appropriate events for quite all the days of the year, so readers can enjoy the pleasure of making suggestions for future addition. ☞The fall list of Studio Publications, 381 Fourth Avenue, is interesting—as Studio announcements always are. A new little series, "Hours of Leisure," at only 35 cents each, sounds excellent, and includes books on Model Theatre Making, Cut Paper Decoration, Fabric Printing, and Dolls' Houses.

⁂ ⁂

☞The new volume of *Modern Publicity* (now in its eleventh year) will be looked forward to by all specialists in advertisement technique. ☞But, as we annually remark, no intelligent booklover should ever let Christmas approach without examining the Studio lists for himself.

⁂ ⁂

☞The announcement by Smith and Haas of New Books, Inc., is causing comment. New Books, Inc., is a plan for distributing fifteen new books a year at 95 cents each, on a club subscription basis. The books are to be cloth bound; the sponsors will have the run of the Smith and Haas list to choose from, with certain exceptions (e.g. books taken by other book clubs); and they hope to enlist the cooperation of other publishers. People in the trade are always on the lookout for new ideas to increase the distribution of books, and will watch how this plan works. Will cloth binding and different editorial selection provide a different reception for New Books from that which met, for instance, Charles Boni's Paper Book Club a few years ago? The trade also remembers the effort of the publishing houses back in 1930 to increase sales of new novels by pricing them at $1.00; this plan involved distribution through bookstores, except for the Crime Club subscription list. One reason why this idea was abandoned was the loss of profit on sales of the dollar novels to circulating libraries. New Books, Inc., will not have this problem, as the trade editions of the books will be published at regular prices—$2.00 and up—for sale through bookstores. ☞Smith and Haas have announced this venture in an experimental tone, and they invite questions from readers and from the trade. The announcement is very recent, and the trade has not yet had time to make the journey from Missouri to ask the questions which we feel sure will be forthcoming. ☞The main question is, undoubtedly, whether the public will find the subscription idea sufficiently appealing, and the titles offered by New Books, Inc., sufficiently attractive, to support this plan. There is certainly no question that the public would like to get books, or anything else, as cheaply as possible.

⁂ ⁂

☞"As the days grow longer, so does the Inner Sanctum list," runs the S. and S. ad in the P. W. for September 22, the day after the equinox. This is the first intimation we've had that the Inner Sanctum has moved to Little America.

⁂ ⁂

☞"If you know your American Crime history," runs a Doubleday publicity note for *Enter Murderers*, "then you probably will know the answers to the following questions." We tried out the questions on our Criminal Recorder, whose opinion of the book you'll find in the customary place, and who scored 100%, as follows:

What was the post-mortem condition of Maria Hendrickson's mouth after she had died by poison? *Terrible.*

What became of the daughter of General Daniel Sickles? *She sickled and died.*

What famous editor was involved in the Richardson-McFarland case? *P. E. G. Quercus.*

Who were some innocent victims of the Chapman murder? *Several mystery reviewers.*

⁂ ⁂

☞Apropos of this, a mystery story for which we predict very fine success is Rex Stout's *Fer de Lance*. In the obese and bulimious Nero Wolfe Mr. Stout has created a real character. Oh, an excellent achievement, a mystery story that is authentically tough without being insistently obscene.

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by **Stark Young**
Eleven big printings in ten weeks
The National Best-Seller
$2.50

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ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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C. S. A. When I return. Brownie.

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APARTMENT WANTED about Oct. 15 for 6 months by broke but pedigreed Christian couple. Furnished or unfurnished; quiet; $35 monthly. Manhattan or Brooklyn. Box 32, Middle Valley, N. J.

MAGAZINES. New subscriptions and renewals. Arthritis prevents former active occupation. Miss Alice Williamson, 804 Drexel Square, Chicago, Illinois.

WANTED—Young man with knowledge carpenter's tools plus general ability for helping with constructive farm plans to fit into cultured somewhat haphazard background. Wages, alas, merely bed, board, laundry. Parker, Swiss Meadows, Williamstown, Mass.

WHO NEEDS Simmons graduate, excellent cook, housekeeper, nursing experience, companionable? Hopeful.

NEW YORK MAN, single, of established position, with wide experience both here and abroad, desires the cooperation (in writing articles and a book) of a highly educated and socially experienced young woman, with sense of humor. One so situated as to easily afford the acceptance of liberal participation in prospective results, in lieu of salary. Interesting literary contacts have been already established. Good typing essential but stenography not. Mutually convenient hours. Please state, briefly, experience, if any; general characteristics and qualifications. Careful consideration accorded interesting replies. Box 973.

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A New Morris Item

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ORNAMENTED MSS. OF THE MIDDLE AGES. By William Morris. New York: Press of the Woolly Whale. 1934.

TO record a hitherto unpublished essay of Morris's is an unusual opportunity, even if the essay in question reveals nothing new in Morris's position or ideas. But in these days of accelerated machine production, Morris's words are as true as ever, and much more necessary to heed.

This little paper on the Middle Ages is in the Henry E. Huntington Library at San Marino, California, and is here printed at the instigation of Mr. F. W. Goudy. When it was written does not appear.

The latter half of the book is devoted to an account of the wanderings of the Albion hand-press on which part of the Kelmscott "Chaucer" was printed—a press now in the possession of the Press of the Woolly Whale, and on which this book has been printed. The facts are sufficiently authenticated by men who knew all about it, and its wanderings are set forth at length. It could come to no better snug-harbor than the present one, if it is to be continued in use and not relegated to a museum; for the book before me is beautifully printed. Happily no attempt was made to do "Morris printing," but a large size of Caslon type was used, and good English hand-made paper, than which there is none better. The color, register, and impression are all admirable, and the book has spirit, as only books printed on dampened hand-made paper can have it. The colophon states that "a modest number of copies (besides four on vellum) have been printed." This will not much help the bibliographer, but will hardly annoy the fortunate owner of a copy.

Footnote on Morris's Influence on American Printing and Printers

I have not seen mention—nor, elsewhere, do I expect to—of the American author and publisher who did most to spread the name of William Morris broadcast over America, who deliberately and consciously tried to print in the Morris manner, who visited Morris in London and wrote about his visit in a vivid essay, whose writings reached millions of Americans as a sort of gospel message, and who claimed for his other craft activities the direct inspiration of Morris. As different from Morris and his background as the Larkin Soap factory at Buffalo was different from Merton Abbey and the quiet reaches of the Thames at Lechlade, this American barker who reminds one of P. T. Barnum was, strange and ridiculous and awful as the fact is, the advertiser of William Morris to the American people from about 1895 to 1915.

Elbert Hubbard of the Roycrofters, Fra Elbertus of East Aurora, was the man who did this. In his *Philistine* magazine (which at the time of his death in the *Lusitania* tragedy had reached a circulation of 225,000 copies a month), in his "Little Journey" to Morris, and in his other writings, he did lip service of a curious sort. From his Roycroft Shop, owing to the effect of Morris's teaching on the mind of a professional advertiser, he spread the name of the Arts and Crafts movement throughout America. And even his flowing tie was an effort to carry on the tradition of Morris's blue flannel shirt! The whole thing is so absurd and so grotesque that it is almost incredible.

For it is to be observed that perhaps in no one single particular did Hubbard really comprehend and follow Morris. Hubbard's printing was unbelievably bad: it was bad in itself, it was ludicrous as a copy of Kelmscott work. As a follower of the Arts and Crafts movement he was beneath contempt, both artistically and ethically: he was a great but canny defender of the commercial system of competitive capitalistic production, and his writings were accepted by American business men as law and gospel (the "Message to Garcia," a subtle argument for loyalty of the wage-slave to his employer, circulated, it is said, 40,000,000 copies), and his furniture was of such a savage type that Morris's, designated by Rossetti as resembling "incubi and succubi," seems almost effeminate!

The great printers and publishers of America were influenced by Morris, certainly, but so far as doing printing in the Morris style signifies the result of that influence there is very little to show—Updike's "Altar Book," possibly to a certain degree Rogers's "Montaigne" and one or two other books, Clarke Conwell's Elston Press books, and a handful of other issues. That Morris's forthright and honest ideals had a far reaching effect on these men and many others is undeniable, however. But they were honest printers and honest men: they were, last of all, advertisers, ballyhoo artists, wretched exploiters of sanctimonious ideas.

And yet—fantastic as it may seem, it is true that the great exploiter of Morris, his most busy introducer to the American people, was the mountebank of East Aurora!

Marco Polo and Others

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO. Revised and edited by Manuel Komroff, illustrations by N. F. Lapshin. New York: Limited Editions Club. 1934.

OF recent editions of Marco Polo, I think this the best. And it is a fine piece of bookmaking. The size is small and easily handled in the reading; the two volumes make again for convenience; the type is that remarkably sparkling "modern" of Mr. Goudy which is so clear and jewel like in the small sizes; and the pictures are quite the most interesting I have seen. I liked the pictures when I was one of the judges—thought them easily the best of all the illustrations submitted in Mr. Macy's competition of last year. And now when they appear in reproduction I am only reinforced in my first impression. There is a dash and a swing to them, a spontaneity and verve which is lacking in most pictures. They are bright with color, full of action and imagination. Here is illustration which in its way is as good as can be done, and which really enlivens the tale. In the current slang they are "swell."

The printing of the illustrations—a none too easy task—has been competently handled, and the typographic arrangement of the volumes is inviting and pleasant. Here is a fine edition of Marco Polo, good to have and good to read.

WINES. By S. Dewey. Chicago: Lakeside Press. 1934.

A small book of a hundred pages, charmingly printed, with much information about French wines, less about other European, and little about American; with maps of the French wine countries, tables of vineyards and owners, and a simple but effective chart of proper glasses in which to serve wine. The advice given seems to be simple and useful to those of us who can have only one wine at dinner—and then only on special occasions! A good, simple, enlightening book.

Lesser Items

"Design and Beauty in Printing," an essay by Frederic W. Goudy, has been issued in small paper covered boards by the Press of the Woolly Whale. It makes a pleasant little volume, set in a revival of Mr. Goudy's early *Village* type face.

⁂ ⁂

The second volume in the Centennial Edition of the Works of Rowland E. Robinson has just appeared from the press of the Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont. Included are "Sam Lovell's Camps and other Stories," and "In the Green Wood." Our old friends Sam and "Antwine" reappear as welcome as ever, but I wish the editors had enlightened us as to how the word "slang" became corrupted from meaning a tongue of land to Lake-Champlain-idiom for a creek. This edition is a good bit of publishing at $2.50 the volume.

CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS.

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*By Gerald Gould in the London Observer

NOW *the author of LITTLE CAESAR writes what is unquestionably his finest novel... creates his greatest character!*

GOODBYE TO THE PAST

By W. R. Burnett

The Critics Urge You to Read It...

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"He made the fatal mistake of falling in love with a respectable woman."

● *Let the SATURDAY REVIEW tell you in its own words about the novel's leading character.*

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